

MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS
IN CONTEMPORARY URBAN CHINA:
A CASE STUDY

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study is based on in-depth interviews with women in 20 families in a southern Chinese city. The interviews focused on the family life of the middle-age women, especially the relationship between mothers and daughters. Eighteen of these women were my classmates in the junior middle school from 1954 to 1957. The life of this generation coincides with the dramatic socio-economic changes in urban China. This paper intends to explore the interaction between the traditional cultural family norms and the changing socio-economic conditions, women's status in particular, through the comparison of the two dyads of mothers and daughters over three generations. The mother-daughter relationship in their three lifespans, i.e. mothers and child-daughters, mothers and adolescent-daughters and mothers and adult-daughters, are described and analysed with special attention on the aspects of the relationship that are influenced by the changes in the larger social setting.

This paper also examines whether the patriarchal order and the patrilineal ideology, which dominated in the Chinese kinship system and influenced China's political system for many millennia, have disappeared as a result of the fundamental changes of the economic structure and the ideological promotion of society. Also, what is the new pattern of family relationships? This paper argues that the interdependence, both emotional and practical, and the mutual attachment and commitment of the mothers and their daughters are constructed from the daughters' childhood and, in most cases, are reinforced after their marriage. As a result, the married daughters are still closely connected to and influenced by their natal

families. Furthermore, the mother-daughter solidarity and the mother's involvement in her grandchildren's rearing enhance the mother's position in her daughter's family. The women's status in the domestic sphere is therefore secured by the association between the mothers and their married daughters. This phenomenon can be explained by what I tentatively call "family associateship". The core of this theory suggests that besides the resident members, a family may have other nonresident member(s). For example, a daughter may continue to be considered and function as a member of her natal family and a mother may be considered and acts like a member in her daughter's family. The level of the association depends on the degree of the nonresident member's involvement in decision-making and resource-control as well as the sharing of resources, duties and obligations in the family.

I INTRODUCTION

Under the strain of modern socioeconomic influences in general, and of the family revolution in particular, the structural and functional integrity of the kinship system is sagging notably, and a new mode of family relationship has been developing to take its place. (C.K. Yang, 1959:20)

Family relations affect our every day ^{life}, our happiness and our misery. The complicated, dynamic, sentimental, changeable but everlasting relations between family members provide novelists with an inexhaustible source of inspiration. Numerous studies by social scientists in their inquiry ^{ies} of culture and human nature have focused on family relationships. The study of family and kinship relationships has drawn special attention from anthropologists who explore the structure of society and the interaction between culture and society. This is because the analysis of the dynamic functions of the components of society's basic unit, the family, is conducive to our understanding of the intrinsic and fundamental attributes of a given society and culture. During the last three decades, through traditional empirical field studies, anthropological inquiries have put special effort in examining the discrepancy between social norms and reality. In this respect, family relations in real life tell us how ordinary people act but not how they should behave according to the doctrines and social norms. In other words, family relationships reflect the cultural characteristics as well as the behavioral nature of the people in a given society.

The study of mother-daughter relationships ^{is} is an interdisciplinary researchtopic. Western studies, during the past four decades, have concentrated on

three basic issues corresponding to the three stages of one's life: maternal deprivation in the daughter's childhood, socialization in adolescence, and the adult daughter's caregiving relationship to her aging mother (Birns & Hay: 1988). Since the late fifties, as more and more women have started to take paying jobs due to financial need or to feminist awakening, "maternal deprivation" has become the focus and the most controversial issue in the study of the mother-child relationship. In the 1950's, Fraiberg's plea for full-time mothering and Winnicott's theory about the natural mother were the most influential texts. Since the late seventies, feminist neo-Freudians have emerged, represented by Dorothy Dinnerstein, as well as many other feminist-oriented studies. Most research of this period is designed to challenge the arguments on the irreplaceability of the mother's role and the "mother blaming" attitude in Western popular culture. Many studies on learning have attempted to prove that the concept of gender role is the result of socialization. Researches on the mother-adult daughter relationships have been less controversial. Most of the findings show that daughters care about their aging mothers more than their brothers do (Lewis & Meredith:1988 , Walker: 1991).¹

An examination of the literature on the Chinese family and kinship relationships reveals that one dyad of family relations, the mother-daughter tie has been neglected. This is not surprising since mothers and daughters, as subordinate members in the family, have also been subordinate or even invisible in most

¹ Vivien Nice argues that the male-dominated model in family studies has caused the patriarchal distortion of mother daughter relationship. See Nice :1992.

studies of the Chinese kinship system.¹ The five cardinal relationships in Confucian China were Wu Lun: lord and subject, father and son, husband and wife, brother and brother, friend and friend. Classic studies of Chinese kinship models emphasized patrilineality, patrilocality and patriarchy; therefore, mother-daughter relationships were of no importance in the analysis of the family system in the Chinese social context. In his influential comparative study of kinship systems, Frances Hsu argues convincingly about the dominance of the father-son relations in the Chinese society (Hsu 1963). In Hsu's analysis of Chinese society he analysed the attributes of relationships of husband-wife, father-son, mother-son and brother-brother, but not the mother-daughter dyad, which was even not included in the table as a comparative category (Hsu, 1971).

A few studies by modern female anthropologists and sociologists have paid attention to non-dominant dyads of family members and uncovered some social significance in these ties. A good example is Margery Wolf's concept of the uterine family unit. Her ethnographic study of rural Taiwanese families during the early seventies has broken through conventional perspectives of the Chinese patriarchal family system and shown important insights into kinship organization and family relations. However, in her book *Revolution Postponed: Women in Contemporary China*, which was based on her field work in Mainland China, Wolf suggests that "the uterine family has disappeared because the need for it has disappeared (Wolf, 1985:p.207)". She argues that the uterine family has lost its functions because mothers with paid jobs have their future ensured by the state through promises of pensions or state aid. Wolf, with a rather rational approach,

¹ The most typical case is C.N.Chen's analysis of the Chinese family and kinship. He gives the word "fang", which means a kinship branch in Chinese, a new identification: father-son relationship, Chen: 1985.

sees the need for the uterine family in terms of economy and financial security. She views the uterine family as a deliberate creation of women themselves. She argues that the uterine family is, in a sense, a feminine response to the patriarchal exercises of filial piety. Her research also shows the continued close tie between mother and adult- daughter. One of her informants said: "Married daughters are closer to their mothers than married sons are (Wolf, 1985:p.210)." This statement sounds familiar to the Mainland Chinese and has been confirmed by many other studies, such as Ellen Judd's field study on villages in Shandong Province from 1986 to 1988 (Judd, 1989). Her study proves that the lasting and close relations between married daughters and their natal families "fall outside the formal framework of discourse in lineal terms but are seen as highly significant in everyday life" (Judd, 1989: p.528). Judd does not look at the relationships from an economic perspective, but emphasizes instead the function of these relationships in terms of the daughter's successful transition to adulthood. Judd argues that "A married woman 'belongs to her *pojia*(her husband's family,' but she can make her *niangjia*(her own family) a continuing part of her practical world of kin (Judd, 1989: p.539)".

Deborah Davis-Friedmann's study of the relations of the Chinese elderly with their children emphasizes the interdependence on a practical level and the consciousness of reciprocal obligation on a moral level. Although she does not specify mother-daughter relations, her study also provides much evidence for the closeness and mutual commitment of mother-daughter relations (Davis-Friedman, 1983). Her findings are also supported by this case study.

The above-mentioned studies are very stimulating for our exploration of the mother-daughter relationships in contemporary China. As for the interaction of social changes and family relationships one could turn to the excellent studies of

culture and kinship systems by both C.K. Yang and Frances Hsu. They have offered two different approaches. Yang's historical and ecological approach provides us with a better understanding of the formation and transformation of Chinese culture. The comparative and synchronical study by Hsu enables us to see the attributes of each dyad of family relationships and the functional structure of the kinship system influenced by the dominant dyad. Their research findings with rich background knowledge and profound insights into the interrelations of culture and family relationships are enlightening.

Among the fundamental socio-economic changes taking place in contemporary urban China, we can identify at least six major aspects that have influenced women's situation in the family and, therefore, the family relationships: 1) the constitutionalization of equal gender status, equal opportunity in education and work, equal pay for men and women; 2) the legitimacy of women's freedom in their choice of marriage partners and divorce; 3) the elimination of private property; 4) the legitimacy of women's inheritance rights; 5) the participation of women in paid jobs and 6) the life pension system of retired employees. Numerous studies have pointed out that all the goals of raising women's status and giving women equal opportunity in both private and social spheres set by the communists Party have yet to be achieved (Andor, 1983; Wolf, 1985 and Honig & Hershatter, 1988). As a matter of fact, the Party has never given a priority to these goals. Conversely, the raising of women's status does not mean the improvement in the quality of their life (Hung, 1986). Viewed from a broader perspective, however, one cannot deny that the past half century has witnessed great transformations in the family life of the Chinese and the situation of urban women in particular. Most of the changes are caused by the above-mentioned tremendous ecological and social changes as well as by the ideological promotion carried out by government machinery.

This study sets out to explore the interaction between traditional cultural family norms and the changing socio-economic conditions, women's status in particular, through the comparison of the two dyads of mothers and daughters over three generations, whose life span coincide with drastic social changes in contemporary China. How have mother-daughter relationships changed from generation to generation? Which aspects have remained unchanged? What kind of social changes have influenced the mother-daughter relationships most? How has the traditional culture resisted to some of the officially imposed changes in the domestic sphere? The patriarchal order and the patrilineal ideology dominated in the Chinese kinship system and influenced China's political system for many millennia. Has it disappeared as a result of the fundamental changes in the economic structure and the ideological promotion of society? What are the new patterns of family relationships and family structure as a result of socio-economic changes? This case study cannot provide a comprehensive answer to these questions but attempts to provide some evidences for further studies.^{II}

II METHODOLOGY

This study is based on in-depth interviews with women in 20 families in a southwest Chinese city, which I call Z city in this paper. The interviews focus on the family life of the middle-age women, especially the relationship between mothers and daughters. Eighteen of these women were my classmates in junior middle school from 1954 to 1957. My own experience and observation as well as a few researches I have conducted among the women in Z city have certainly provided me with much background knowledge. In the meantime, I have to be aware of the possible bias caused by some preconceived opinions and prejudice.

I was born in Z city in Southwest China and migrated to Hong kong in 1979. During the last 14 years, I have been back almost every summer to visit my family. Since 1987 I have been conducting interviews of women for my research. One evening in the Summer of 1991, just a few days before my trip was finished, some people knocked at my door and called my name. I opened the door and saw two women and two men of my age. "Do you recognize us?" they asked laughingly. Their faces looked so familiar and I was touched by the warmth in their expression. "You must be my classmates sometime, somewhere!" Yes, we were studying in the same class at a junior middle school thirty five years ago. I had not seen them for a good 36 years.

We graduated from the same junior middle school in Z city in 1957. That year was remembered because it begins China's dark age of 20 years. Although we had lost touch a long time ago, all the former classmates cherished those worry-free school years in their memory and had been looking for each other since 1984. I became the forty third in their list of correspondence. That night I was very

excited and decided almost right away to interview the "girl" classmates for my study of mother-daughter relationships.

In March of 1993 I wrote a letter to them in order to prepare the informants to reconstruct their former relations with their mothers and daughters. In my letter I talked about my own life and then explained my research purpose and the questions I would like to ask. Y.C., the coordinator of the regular classmates reunion, helped me to contact the classmates whom I planned to interview and circulate my letter among them. She also helped me arrange the interviews. In the Summer of 1993 I went back to Z city with my 14-year-old daughter and spent one month interviewing 20 'girl' classmates, their daughters and mothers, if available. In most cases, I interviewed one classmate for 3 to 4 hours and each interview of their daughters and mothers lasted approximately 1 to 2 hours. I usually had lunch or dinner with an interviewed family. If I found the case interesting, I would go back again. When there was a teenage girl in the family, my daughter would go and chat with her separately and ask questions according to the questionnaire I had prepared for her.

Usually, I started an interview by spending approximately 10 to 15 minutes on answering their questions about my own family life or my research. I felt comfortable about revealing some of the very private side of my life story before them. I did it not simply because of "interview tactics" but because I really liked to have a heart-to-heart talk and share my feelings with them. In addition to these family interviews, we had one reunion of classmates and a few gatherings. The stories I learned from them on these occasions gave me many clues for further supplement the interviews.

My long questionnaire covers as many aspects of the mother- daughter relations in one's childhood, adolescence, adulthood and aging years as I could think of. Before going to China, I did a few pilot interviews with some female Mainland graduate students in Hong Kong. These trial interviews helped me to improve my questionnaire and provided me with more experience. Through the interviews with women from other Chinese cities I also intended to find out whether the cases in Z city were extraordinary. During my field work in Z city, however, I seldom followed the questionnaire but listened to the life stories of theirs, their mothers' and their daughters'. Meanwhile, I tried to make them focus on the female members of the family and their relationships. I also requested each informant to fill in two forms. One was designed to evaluate their relations with their family members and relatives, marking a ten-points scale from very bad to very good. Another form was designed to compare the ideology, personality and interest of two generations: mother, father, adult daughter and adult son.

I have filled in these two forms myself and found that I resemble my mother in many ways. For example, like my mother, I believe in destiny and luck. I have been lucky to be able to have 20 former classmates to interview. Of course, there are other factors which are not determined by mere luck, such as the low social mobility in this area and those years.

III BACKGROUNDS OF THE CASES

For convenience of description I would like to call the women of my generation, who are around 50 years old, the middle generation, their mothers the older generation, and their daughters the younger generation. I also term the dyad of the middle generation with their mothers as the first mother-daughter dyad and the dyad of thees with their daughters as the second mother-daughter dyad.

The following are introductions to the 20 cases. For each case, I will give some basic information on the old and the middle generations. I will devote one paragraph to each case dealing with the old and the middle generation respectively. I use two letters to represent the name of each middle generation woman. Their mothers and daughters appear in this paper as X.X's mother or X.X.' daughter. Thus X.X.'s mother would belong to the old generation and X.X.'s daughter the young generation. Fifteen of the 20 middle generation women have 19 daughters altogether. So this study involved 39 dyads of mother-daughter and 59 women over three generations.

Case 1

Y.H's mother received no formal education, but she could read. She was born in a small town and helped to support the family by spinning and weaving before she became the 2nd wife of a city man at the age of 28. Her husband owned a factory. She was a housewife until the early 1950s, when her husband died and she inherited his title of "co-operative" capitalist. She had to work as an ordinary worker in the factory and bring up her six children by herself.

Y.H. was the eldest daughter in the family. Upon graduation from university in 1965, she was assigned to work as a teacher in vocational school in a county. She married a colleague and gave birth to a daughter. Their work unit was moved back to the city suburbs in 1976. Her daughter was taken care of by Y.H.'s mother, who lived in the city. In 1983, she and her husband were both transferred to a university in the city. She is now an associate professor. Her daughter is studying at the same university. Since their dormitory is on campus, the daughter stays with them.

Case 2

R.L's mother used to be an apprentice in a photo studio. She married another apprentice in the studio and they later opened their own studio. After the studio was confiscated she became a technician, working in the same studio until she retired in early 1980. She gave birth to three daughters and one son.

R.L. was the eldest among her siblings. She was brought up by her grandma, her mother's mother, and met her parents for the first time at the age of 5. She graduated from university in 1967, in the midst of the Cultural Revolution, and was assigned to work in a county middle school. Her husband worked in the city. R.L. gave birth to a son then a daughter. The three of them returned to the city in 1977, seven years after she married. Her son now works in the same unit as her husband and comes home every one or two months. The daughter is in her last year at a middle school.

Case 3

H.F's mother married into a family which owned some property. She had to run the business because her husband was a gambler and opium smoker. She gave birth to 11 children. Only 4, one son and three daughters survived. She was illiterate. But as a faithful Catholic, She was able to read the bible . She was later arrested and detained in a education-through-labour camp for her involvement in the "counterrevolutionary religious activities". She died in 1972 at the camp.

H.F was the youngest child in the family. She failed to be accepted by an ordinary senior middle school because of her 'bad' family background. After graduation from a technical secondary school she became a technician and has since been working in the same unit for the last 32 years. Her husband is a Party member. For fear of landing her husband in trouble, she never visited her mother in the labour camp. She has two daughters. One is working at the same factory as her father and the other has just started a small business. The four of them live together.

Case 4

Z.Y's mother died when she was only one year old. She was brought up by her grandma, her father's mother. Her father married again. Her step mother, who lives in another city with her father, is good to her and comes to see her almost every year.

At the age of 17 Z.Y. quit middle school and started to work at a factory due to the family's financial difficulties. Two of her financial supporters were classified as rightists and had their salaries reduced. She married a soldier-driver, complying with the wish of her step mother. She has a son and two daughters. All

of them are working now. The elder daughter married a soldier-driver too and has a five-year-old son. Z.Y. has retired from her job at the age of 50 and is now trying to run a small business.

Case 5

Y.F's mother was an orphan. She ran away from her brother's home and came to the city to work in a textile factory. She married a worker in the same factory. Her health was poor and she only gave birth to one daughter. Later, the family adopted a girl, whose father was divorced by his wife.

Y.F. grew up with her step sister. Upon graduation from medical school, she married a classmate. Both were assigned to work first in the clinic of a commune in a remote minority area, and then in a county hospital. They managed to get transferred to the city in the early 1980s. Their son is a student at medical school and their daughter has found a job at a post office in the city.

Case 6

R.F's mother began to contribute to the family by running a grocery stall when she was eight years old. After marrying an army officer at 22, she enjoyed the life of a lady of leisure. In the late 1940s, they lost all their money in the bank and she became a vegetable peddler.

R.F was an only child. After finishing junior middle school, she worked in a factory and then in a primary school. She is still teaching in the same school now. She has a daughter from her first marriage and a son from the present marriage. (Should I attach the note of her interview to the paper?)

Case 7

Y.R's mother was illiterate. She had a happy marriage and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. She was a housewife until the early 1950s, when her husband was expelled from his work unit. She got a job as a box-office clerk in the cinema, which used to belong to her family. The family of 9 people lived on her meagre salary of 35 yuan a month.

Y.R was the favorite grandchild of her grandma, who lived with the family and took care of her. Upon leaving junior middle school, she became one of the first generation of educated city youth that sent down in the countryside. Her husband helped her get transferred to the city. Now she teaches at a primary school and has two sons.

Case 8

G.X's mother assisted her husband in managing a noodle processing shop and a grocery. After the government took over the grocery in the early 1950s, she was offered a job as a saleswoman in the shop. She gave birth to 8 children and, in addition, adopted a girl of G.X's age.

G.X entered a factory at the age of 17 after she graduated from senior middle school. She was promoted to the head of her workshop later. She has one son and two daughters and two grandchildren. She is now retired and takes care of her grandchild at home.

Case 9

Z.F's mother has three daughters and two sons. She used to be a housewife. During the campaign of the Great Leap Forward she was mobilized to work in a lace factory and worked there until she retired at the age of 55.

Z.F graduated from university in 1965 and was assigned to a research institution. Both she and her husband are working in the same unit. They have a son and a daughter, who stayed with Z.F's mother in the city during their middle school years, because Z.F's work unit and their home was in the suburbs, where the quality of schools is poor.

Case 10

S.H's mother fled to the Southern China during the anti-Japanese War. Her parents arranged her marriage. After the husband died in the early 1950s, she worked as an electric welder to support the family. She kept three children with her and sent two to Shanghai to be brought up by her sister. She was persecuted during the Cultural Revolution because her husband used to own a truck and the family was classified as capitalist.

After completing her studies at a vocational school, S.H. was assigned to work at the same truck station as her mother. She married a driver and gave birth to two sons. S.H.'s mother and her 14-year-old sister, who dropped out of the primary school, help S.H. take care of her two sons.

Case 11

S.T's mother, an illiterate woman who grew up in the countryside, married a medicine store owner in the city. She insisted on doing housework and rearing the 5 children by herself, even if the family could afford to hire domestic helps. She found a paid job in 1958, when the store was taken over by the government.

S.T married a doctor after graduating from university. They have three daughters, who stayed with S.T's mother throughout the period from the third year of the primary school to the end of middle school, because the family then lived in the suburbs.

Case 12

L.F's mother went to university in Beijing, where she met her future husband. To free themselves from a family-arranged engagement, the couple eloped to Japan, married and studied there until the war broke out. They returned to China to their home town, Z city. She gave birth to three sons and L.F is the only daughter. She started to work as a bank clerk in 1954 and was demobilized by the government when the economy shrank in 1956.

L.F got married and gave birth to a daughter when she was still a university student. She was assigned to a county middle school. Her husband had worked in North China for 8 years and joined her after their son was born. Their daughter lived with L.F's mother until she was 12 years old when L.F and her husband managed to return to Z city.

Case 13

M.Z's mother married a technician and her widowed mother also lived with them. After her husband lost his job, the two women became breadwinners for 6 years. There were six daughters and one son in the family. From the early 1950s, M.Z's father worked in a county. Her mother and the children and the grandma lived in the city.

M.Z, the eldest daughter of the family started to work after she graduated from senior middle school. She married a cadre and gave birth to one son and two daughters. M.Z's mother and grandma helped her to bring up her children. Even now, M.Z's mother is still taking care of M.Z's grandchild.

Case 14

H.L's mother was a housewife all her life. Her husband was the head of a small train station in a remote area. They had 3 sons and 4 daughters, most of whom were sent to stay with their relatives in the city in order to receive better schooling.

H.L went to a secondary technical school and worked in a factory after graduation. She is still working in the same factory. Her husband, a middle-rank cadre, has retired and her two sons have married. She is looking after her grandchild on weekends and holidays.

Case 15

C.Z's mother was the second wife of her husband, who was a business man. She gave birth to a son and a daughter. She was killed by bandits when C.Z was three years old.

C.Z had been sent to another city to join her "big mother", her father's first wife, before her own mother was killed. C.Z's father was arrested in the early 1950s and disappeared for ever. She was adopted later by her own mother's sister, who was tortured to death during the Cultural Revolution. She graduated from a technical secondary school and married a friend's brother. They have a son, who married last year.

Case 16

Z.P's mother was a slave girl, sold by her parents to a family in Z city. Through a match-maker, she married a clerk, who had a wife and three children in the North, and gave birth to a son and a daughter. She then worked as a maid for a military officer's family and went to a county with them away from her own family. She died in an accident in the county when Z.P was a teenager.

Z.P. Graduated from junior middle school at 14 and started to work in a factory. She has been a turner for 31 years before she was transferred to the factory's trade union in 1988. Her husband is a driver in the same factory. The couple, their son, daughter, daughter- in-law and grandson are all living together. Her daughter works as a shop assistant.

Case 17

Y.L's mother used to be a nurse. She married a clerk in the Kuomintang army. Before too long, she found that he was still married a woman in Beijing and had two children. Her marriage was unhappy. After her husband was arrested by the government, she had to support herself and 5 children. One daughter starved to death.

Y.L. was sent to the countryside as the first generation of the sent-down youth in 1957. She has been teaching in a village primary school. She was promoted the school master in the late 1980s. She married a colleague and they have three daughters and one son. The daughters are all married and live away from home.

Case 18

Q.C's mother gave birth to 3 daughters and one son. She died when Q.C. was 6 years old. Q.C.'s father married again and had 4 more children. Q.C's stepmother worked as a kitchen help in a kindergarten. After her husband died in 1957, she and her stepdaughters supported the family.

Q.C. became a salesgirl after she graduated from junior middle school. She married a doctor, who had served in the army in a county before he was demobilized. They came back to Z city in the mid 1980s. Q.C. brought up her son and daughter by herself. Now she has retired and takes care of her daughter's one-year-old son.

Case 19

J.K's mother was born in Shanghai and graduated from primary school. She married an engineer and gave birth to 10 children. Only 5 of them survived. J.K. is 30 years younger than her eldest brother. The family fled to Z city during the Anti-Japanese War and returned to Shanghai in the 1950s, leaving J.K. and one of her sister in Z city. J.K. was studying in middle school at the time.

J.K. married a doctor after finishing her studies at a medical school in late 1969. She went back with her husband to his home town and lived together with his large extended family. She gave birth to a daughter and got divorced before her son was born. She moved to Z city later. Her husband obtained custody of the daughter, who went to Z city by herself and lived alone by herself.

Case 20

Y.C's mother was a housewife. She had 8 children, 5 daughters and 3 sons. The family owned some land in the countryside and a drug store in the city. Her husband was arrested and sent to a labour camp in 1958. This was such a great blow to her that she started to suffer from a mental disorder. She, too, was arrested and sent to the labor camp later.

Y.C. graduated from university and was assigned to work in another city. She managed to come back to Z city 8 years later. Her husband used to work in a county and have affairs with other women. Y.C. divorced him and remains single now. Her former parents-in-law have been given the custody of her son.

Table 1 A Comparison of Education and Occupation Among Two Generations

✓
72.11.0
6/5

	Old Generation	Middle Generation
Illiterate and semi-illiterate	14	0
Primary school	4	0
Junior middle school	0	10
Senior middle school/ technical school	0	4
University	1	6

	<u>Old Generation</u>		<u>Middle Generation</u>	
	Before mid- 1950s	After mid- 1950s	Before 1980s	After 1980s
Housewife	11	8	0	0
Tradeswoman	7	0	0	0
Blue-collar	2	10	10	3
White-collar	1	2	8	13
Professional	0	0	2	4

The figures in Table 1 indicate the drastic difference between the two generations in terms of education and occupations.¹ Due to the compulsory nine-years education in Chinese cities, the middle generation has at least had education at the junior middle school level. The change in family size is also obvious. The women belonging to the middle generation were married in 1960s or 1970s. They were not influenced by the government's one-child policy. However, they have much less children than their mothers. On average, the number of children in one family is 5.05 for the old generation and 2.15 for the middle. When I started this study, I did not realize that it was the last chance to compare the mother-daughter dyads between generations before the only child generation began to emerge in Chinese cities.

¹ According to the 1982 national census, the percentage of blue-collar, white-collar and professionals among urban women in paid jobs are roughly 66%, 20% and 14%. See Statistics on Chinese Women (1949-1989): pp.306- 308.

IV MOTHERS AND YOUNG DAUGHTERS

Nurturing baby girls

For the working class women of the old generation, giving birth to a baby, boy or girl, was not a big deal. Most of them delivered their babies at home with or without the help of a midwife. "Your generation makes too much fuss about having a baby." This was a typical comment the old generation women made about their daughters giving birth to child. They told their married daughters how they handled the situation all by themselves. H.F.'s mother delivered all her 8 babies at home. "I cut the umbilical cord with a piece of broken porcelain, and wrapped up the baby. That's all", She told H.F. proudly. Seven of her 11 babies died from umbilical tetanus.

All, but one middle generation woman had their babies delivered in the hospital. Y.L. was an exception. As a teacher in the countryside, Y.L. had to grow her own vegetables as well as teaching. She kept working until the last days of her pregnancy. At the time her third daughter came out, she was still working in her plot. She bit the umbilical cord in two. "The umbilical was crisp", she told me.

Without exception, the baby girls of two generations were all breast-fed by their mothers. Usually, the women of the old generation fed their girls for more than eighteen months. Some women continued breast feeding until they became pregnant again. H.F., the youngest child in the family, suckled her mother's breast until she was 3 years old. Weaning came earlier to the younger generation, for most of the girls left their mother's breast at a time ranging from 6 to 12 months. The method of weaning, which has been passed down by the mothers of each generation, remains quite the same. Some bitter but harmless Chinese herbs, such

as Chinese goldthread, spread on the nipples would discourage the baby from persistent attachment to the mother's breast. I was told by the old generation women that weaning was easier with baby girls than with boys. The middle generation could not tell the difference for they have fewer children. Women of the younger generation, who were allowed to have no more than one child, were in no position to make a comparison.

After the birth of the baby, the couple would sleep separately. Usually, the mother slept on the double bed with the baby and the father slept on a single bed, a bench or a sofa, depending on what was available. If the place was too small to allow another piece of furniture, the father would sleep at the foot of the bed. This kind of sleeping arrangement might continue for years, especially when the baby was a girl and the last child in the family. G.X.'s youngest daughter slept with her until she was 8 years old. Living conditions improved a lot over the three generations. Even so, nowadays the mothers still sleep with their babies or young children.

Why did the husband sleep separately? Did he hate to be woken up by the baby's cry in the middle of night or did his wife intend to avoid having sex with him? The women interviewed laughed at my question and answered: "Because of convenience".

The husbands of the old generation women seldom gave their wives a hand in nursing their babies. The husbands of the middle generation women, however, were obligated to share most of the duties of child care, especially when the child was under 2 years old. After the most troublesome first 2 years had passed, the fathers usually withdrew gradually from childcare. Seven of the old generation women have now become grandmothers. According to them, the younger

generation husbands, who are the fathers of the family's only child, at least are equally responsible for child rearing.

The 20 middle generation women were all working mothers. They were granted 56 days of maternal leave, including the leave before and after the birth of the baby. Most mothers went to work 6 or 7 weeks after they gave birth to a child. R.L. and Z.Y. were two typical cases.

Z.Y., a factory worker, had 20 minutes of nursing-time in the morning and afternoon shift respectively. The factory was in the suburbs. Every morning she carried her baby girl on her back and rode a bicycle for half an hour to the factory before 8:00. She got home the same way after 6:00 in the evening. During the day the baby stayed at the nursing centre. A woman, who retired from this factory, looked after about 15 babies. The nursery was poorly furnished and very cold in winter. Worried about the endless flu circulating among the babies, Z.Y. managed to be transferred to a workshop in the city. She then asked her seventy-year-old grandma to look after her baby in the daytime. By adding her two nursing breaks to the lunch hour she was able to leave her job for one hour and 40 minutes at noon. She rushed to the factory canteen and bought a bowl of rice with some vegetables on the top. To save time for her daughter and some domestic chores, she ate the lunch on her way home. It took her about 15 minutes to get home and finish her lunch. Within the valuable one hour, she needed to clean the baby, feed her and wash a lot of wet diapes. "I did it as fast as in the battle field", she said.

R.L. was teaching at a county middle school. She could afford to hire a teenage girl from the countryside to help her with washing and cleaning. She could manage to take care of the baby herself because she did not have regular office hours. The classroom was near her dormitory. As soon as class was over she

rushed back to her baby. She hardly had any time to prepare for class and correct the students' homework during the day. She slept less than 6 hours a day for she could not start to work until her baby went to sleep. At midnight the sound of her fingers running through the students' exercise books could be heard because her hands were so coarse after constantly holding firewood and coal, washing in cold water and doing other domestic chores.

The shortage of nutritious food was a problem for almost all the middle generation mothers.

Life was difficult in those days. For every new born baby there was a ration of 500 grammes of milk powder. After I bought the baby's ration (dingliang), her birth certificate was stamped. The certificate was full of stamps of all kinds: "egg supplied", "pork supplied", "oil supplied" and so on. Those were all special supplies for the new born baby and the mother. The family had to find other ways to feed their babies. Giving the parents' food rations to the child was the simplest and the usually adopted practice at that time.

Y.L., a sent-down youth, fell in love with a young villager. She was attracted by his talent as an amateur violinist. She married him and gave birth to their first daughter a year later. That was the early 1960s, a famine prevailed in the countryside and many peasants, including her husband, suffered from hepatitis. He sold his violin and bought an air gun. He killed the birds with the gun and provided Y.L. and the child with enough protein to survive the years of starvation. Y.L.'s sister died during the famine.

As mentioned above, the husbands of the middle generation women usually were willing to help with child care. However, 8 of the 20 women were nursing their babies alone because their husbands did not live in the same place by

the time their babies were born. According to the family-visiting (tanqing) regulation, couples living separately had annual leave of one month to visit each other. The first month after the baby was born supposed to be the most crucial period of a woman's life time. The woman's mother usually plays an important role in taking care of both the baby and the mother. We will discuss this issue in chapter VI.

Caring for young daughters

Women of the old generation usually got married in the 1930s or the 1940s. Many of them did not take paid job until late 1950s. As a full-time housewife, a woman could, presumably, spend a lot of time with her children. My assumption proved wrong after the interviews. Only two of the 20 middle generation daughters were well taken care of by their mothers when they were little girls. The boys did not enjoy any privileges either in terms of their mothers' personal care. The mothers had to meet other more "urgent" needs rather than keeping their children company. The circumstances which kept the mothers busy were varied.

- 1) The mother was the breadwinner of the family.

Nine of the 20 old generation women had been the only breadwinner of the family for some years.

H.F.'s family owned a small transportation business. They had four horse-drawn carriages and hired 4 to 12 workers. They also owned some small properties in the city. H.F.'s father was an easygoing person and a gambler, who was not interested in doing business. He went so far as to sell the family property to pay his gambling debts. H.F.'s mother, an illiterate woman, used to earn some

run the carriage business and collected rents in behalf of her husband. When she had time to spare, she would do tailoring or sewing.

R.F.'s father and M.Z.'s father were unemployed and their mothers supported the families by hawking vegetables. The fathers of Y.C., Y.R., C.Z and Y.L. were put in jail by the Communist Party in the early 1950s and their mothers raised the children alone for some years. The mothers of Y.H., S.H., and Q.C. became widowed when they were young and became breadwinners in their families.

2) The mothers had paid jobs and shared the financial responsibility with their husbands .

Only two of the old generation women were full time employees before 1950. Y.L.'s mother was a nurse and did not quit her job after marrying a policeman in the 1940s. Y.F.'s mother was an orphan and was looked after by her brother and sister-in-law. Because her brother and sister-in-law treated her badly she fled to Z city at the age of 15 and became a textile worker. She worked there until she died at the age of 54.

R.L.'s mother was sent to a studio to be an apprentice by her widowed grandmother when she was still in her teens. Later she was married another apprentice. The young couple started their own business. After their shop was taken over by the government, she remained an employee of the studio and worked until she retired at the age of 55.

3) The mothers, who gave birth to more than 5 children, were occupied by endless housework.

Thirteen old generation women had five or more children. In most cases, a child was two years older or younger than her/his sibling. That means the mother's attention would shift to a younger child when the older one was two years old. The housework in those days was much more time-consuming than the housework the middle generation women had to handle. The mothers had to make clothes and shoes for the children. It took at least 80 hours to make one pair of shoes.

Apart from L.F., all the 19 middle generation women could not remember their mothers ever spending time just playing with them or telling them stories, when they were small. They liked to stay beside their mothers, watching their mothers, whose hands were full with domestic chores. Z. F. learned how to make the upper part of shoes at the age of 6. She was making a small toy shoe while her mother was making real shoes. In S.T.'s impression, the most unforgettable warm memory of her childhood was the winter nights. Her mother was making shoes or clothes and she and her sisters were sitting around the stove together, doing their own "needlework".

Relatives and neighbors judged a married woman by the appearance of her children. To let their children eat well and dress neatly was the main concern of mothers.

"For my mother, the most important thing was to dress all her children neatly. She sold her gold ring and necklace to buy a sewing machine. She worked at the photo studio during the day and made clothes for us in the evenings and nights. When there was a banquet or a holiday gathering of relatives, she always stayed up all night to

tailor new clothes for all of us so the relatives could be impressed by her nicely dressed children. 'We must zhengqi (make a good showing)', she used to say." (from the interview of R.L.)

"All our relatives got together on the Chinese New Year holidays. My mother started to prepare for the occasion months before. She made new clothes and shoes for me, my three sisters and three brothers. She also prepared spare clothes and shoes for the younger ones. 'In case they fall down and spoil their new clothes, I can change them into others right away.' She enjoyed the good reputation among the relatives and she was proud of herself." (from the interview of H.L.)

There are two exceptions concerning the care of girls. One was L.F.'s mother. Among the 20 old generation women she was the only one who entered university. She even had a chance to attend Lu Xun's lectures. She was very much influenced by the new mentality prevailing among the "advanced youth" at the time. Also, she was well-off enough to hire a servant to help her with domestic chores so that she could concentrate on child rearing. She spent a lot of time with little L.F., teaching her how to read and write. She deliberately worked on developing L.F.'s interest in classical Chinese literature, asking her to recite poems when L.F. was only 4 years old.

Another special case was J.K.'s mother. J.K.'s father was a senior engineer and the family was well off. Her mother had three daughters and two sons, all were taken care of by the family maids. J.K.'s mother played mahjong day and night with her friends and paid little attention to her children.

There were some other old generation families which could afford to hire domestic help, but some women chose not to. S.T.'s mother grew up in the countryside and married into a rich merchant family, but she preferred to do the

housework and take care of the children by herself. Five old generation women had a maid to help them with heavy work, but they still worked from morning till night. All were proud of themselves, when they told their daughters about how capable they were in handling all their jobs. Dilligence and thrift were highly appreciated virtues of women in those days.

Grandma -- mother's substitute

As described above, mothers of both the old and middle generation were very busy when their daughters were small. Due to their other more substantial responsibility such as to eking out the family's livelihood, they did not have time for their daughters. The grandma, particularly the maternal grandmother, usually played the mother's role as a care giver, if she was available. Four of the middle generation women were raised by their grandmas, two by their paternal grandmothers and another two by their maternal grandmothers. The siduation has not changed. Four of the younger generation women spent more time with their maternal grandmas in their childhood than with their own parents.

"Two long photo-taking tours took my parents five years. I lived with my popo (maternal grandma), for all those years. We lived in the suburbs with a relative's family. I remember that I was taken to meet my parents at the age of about five. My grandma told me:" They are your mum and dad." I was so frightened that I hid behind my grandma and could not speak a word." (from the interview of R.L.)

"I was the first child of my parents. My neinei (paternal grandma), lived with us and she was the boss in the family. My mother was very afraid of my neinei. She ate her meals in the kitchen but not at the dining table with us. My grandma loved me more than anyone else in the family. I slept with her and spent a lot of time with her. I should say that my grandma raised me, not my mother. For a long time I

thought that my mother did not love me. She cared more about my sisters and brothers." (from the interview of Y.R.)

Y.H.'s daughter, now a university student, was cared for by her maternal grandma when she was young. She told me that she knew more about her grandma than her mother did. She had many warm memories about her childhood, about the time she spent with her grandma, about her uncle and aunty. "Will you leave your own child with your mother in the future?" " Yes, of course, if my mother is willing to look after her."

One woman of the old generation seemed different. She told her daughters and sons even before they got married that she would not take care of her grandchildren.

My mother warned me and my sisters and brother that she would not look after our children. "I have done enough. I am fed up with kids. I would be tired even by looking at kids. After I moved back to Z city she never came to visit her grandchildren. Once she came across my three-year-old daughter in a park. My daughter did not recognize her. The story became a family joke.

None of the middle generation women ever entered a child care centre or kindergarten because such modern facilities did not emerge in Z city until the 1950s. Their daughters, however, were sent to the day care centres or kindergartens, run by their work units or by the government. Most middle-size work units had these facilities to free the working mothers from apprehensions about their young children(Hung: 1990). The kindergartens run by the government were much better in terms of equipment, nurses and surroundings. The day- and-night kindergartens, quantuo, where the children returned home only at weekends,

were the most desirable for the parents, if they could afford the fee and have access to them.

Z.Y. managed to sent her second daughter to a quantuo kindergarten through the "back door". Many years later, she was surprised to hear her daughter telling a relative: "My mother was cruel, she sent me to a quantuo kindergarten".

All the kindergartens and nurseries in Chinese cities were non- profit-making at that time, so they charged very a low fee. Even so, 12 yuan was still a large portion of the family's income, which was only 70 to 100 yuan a month for most families. Only half of the 20 middle generation women sent their children to the kindergarten when they were aged between four and seven.

As discussed above, both the old and the middle generation mothers spent little time on their young-daughters. Nevertheless, their daughters did not have a lonely childhood at all. They had plenty of companions: sisters, brothers, cousins, who might live in the same yard. They also had peers to play with in the neighborhood.

Y.C.'s family ran a Chinese drug store. They lived in the same yard with her paternal uncles' families. There were 18 children altogether. Every afternoon, when they were back from school, all of them sat around a huge round table in the sitting room and did their homework.

H.F. had lived in the dormitory of her unit with her two daughters before her husband was transferred to Z city. More than ten families from her work unit lived in a quadrangle, where about 15 of children played together everyday. During the school vacations the the children would go to each other's house in the morning, light the fire in the coal stove and cook rice for each family in turn.

More than one woman I interviewed complained about the modern multi-story buildings in which they lived. This kind of housing makes it impossible for neighbors to become close to each other and for children to play together.

Attachment of the daughter to the mother

The twenty cases do not show any evidence of differences suggested by the concept of preoedipal period and oedipal period in mother-daughter relations (Chodorow, 1978 :97-110). During their childhood, the girls of both middle and young generations, with a few exceptions, were very close to their mothers. The mothers, busy as they were, spent more time and talked more with the girls than the fathers did. The mothers were responsible for their daily necessities, food and clothes. It was the mothers who gave them pocket money when they started to go to school. Whenever they were in trouble, they turn to the mothers for help. A local expression for the phenomenon says: "She is her mother's tail". But there is a noticable change in terms of the attachment of the daughter to the mother. The middle generation girls did not became as strongly attached to their mothers as the younger generation. The following three reasons have caused the change.

1 Generally speaking, the family atmosphere has became more relaxed as the patriarchal order has declined. Some old generation mothers still had their meal in the kitchen instead of with the family at the dinner table. No such thing would happen in the families of the middle generation. The parents were less strict with the children, boys or girls. They were more sympathatic to the children' request for attachment, which, especially physical attachment, was considered improper. a few decades ago.

2 The attachment of girls to their mothers was discouraged by the old generation mothers, who had to carry out their "more important" duties rather than having fun or playing with their little girls or listening to them. When the girls were trying to attract the mothers' attention, they were told "Go to play with your sisters. Mum is busy," or, while the mother was in bad mood, "Can't you see I am busy, get out of my way".

3 The middle generation were all working mothers. They were not always available for their daughters. A young daughter could not turn to her mother anytime she wanted so she was afraid of losing her and became more attached to her when she was around.

S.T.'s three daughters slept in one bedroom. In the mornings, they listened carefully and wished their father would get up early so they could all go and lay beside their mother for sometime before she got up and left for work. "Those mornings, sleeping beside my mother in the big bed together with my sisters, was the most warm memory I have about my childhood", she said.

The daughters, who went to kindergartens, were also very attached to the mothers for the same reason.

Z.Y.'s 5-year-old daughter was in kindergarden. Everyday, about 6 o'clock, Z.Y. would come to pick her up. The little girl went out to the street, carrying a small stool with her. Sitting on her stool on the pavement, she looked eagerly to the direction, from where her mother would appear and became overjoyed by seeing Z.Y. approaching on her bicycle and ran to her arms. Z.Y.'s younger daughter, who stayed in a day-and-night kindergarden escaped from the kindergarden one day because she missed her mother so much. Once, she saved a

steamed stuffed bun, which was luxurious food in those hard days, quietly put it in her pocket and brought it to her mother, who did not feel well and was lying in bed. She knelt beside the bed and watched her mother finishing the bun. As she remembered, that was the happiest day in her childhood.

Needless to say both of the middle and the young generation girls, who were raised by their grandmas were less attached to their mothers. Some of them became very close to their mothers later and some remained distant from their mothers. No certain pattern can be identified.

Are boys superior to girls?

Most of the middle generation women did not remember that they were treated differently from their brothers. The most common phenomenon was that boys were not required to help their mothers with domestic chores. When I asked them to recall whether there were any different treatment as much as possible, a few women said that their mothers worried about their brothers academic performance at school more than theirs. Few of them experienced a sort of insignificant inferior treatment by their mother at home. According to their recollections, their mothers loved them equally as their brothers, only on occasions had their mothers show partiality.

H.F., the youngest child of the family, was her father's favorite, but her mother did not show any favoritism towards her as her father did. When H.F., her brother, her mother and her mother's friend went to visit a friend or to do some shopping, her mother would take her brother along in the same rickshaw and let her sit together with the friend. She remembered well that once her mother took her and her brother to the New Year market and bought a toy for her brother but

nothing for her. She cried bitterly. Her mother was not moved enough to buy anything for her, however.

Y.H.'s two younger sisters of 5 and 7 years old were sent to the market by their mother early every morning to buy a piece of pork. Her mother minced the pork and made a meat pie for the boys. The girls had no share of it.

Both Y.F. and R.F. were the only children in the families. R.F.'s father told her again and again that girl and boy were the same. Her father taught her how to read and write before she reached school age. Y.F.'s parents were worried that Y.F., as a only child, did not have peers to play with, so they adopted a girl of her age. Now thinking back, Y.F. was touched by her parents' sacrifice because an extra child burdened her parents, two low-income workers quite significantly.

One of the most obvious changes with regard to the mothers' attitude towards children was that most middle generation mothers did not give boys as many the privileges as their mothers once did. Some still asked their daughters to do more domestic chores than their sons. The daughters, not the sons, were always considered to be the helps of their mothers. There are also a few cases whee boys did more housework than girls.

Of all the younger generation girls, R.F.'s daughter is the only one who felt strongly about the discrimination by her mother against her (see Chaper VIII).

Summary

There is no fundamental difference between the two generations with regard to the mother-young daughter relations. Neverthelss, from one generation to another, husbands became more and more involved in the caring of young

children. Middle generation women were all full-time employees and were at the same time responsible for most domestic chores. Old generation women were busy either with money-earning jobs or endless housework. The old generation women had more than five children on average, double the number of the children of the middle generation. Also, the domestic chores, such as making a fire and cooking, required longer hours. Much of housework, including the making of shoes and clothes were gradually replaced by shopping and became less time consuming. The mothers of the two generations were mainly concerned about providing the children, boys as well as girls, with enough food and warm clothes. There are three noticeable changes. One is that the privileges enjoyed by the boys in a few families no longer existed among the families of the middle generation. Another is that the grandmas who took care of their grandchildren were all maternal grandmothers in the cases studied. The third change is that the younger generation girls became more attached to their mothers than the middle generation girls.

For both the generations, it was natural for a grandmother to resume the mother's responsibility as a care-giver to the girl child. girl. As we can see from their future relations with their daughters, the early deprivation of mother did not seriously affect their role or affectional relationship. However, examining the cases which had the best relationships (two of the first dyad and two of the second dyad) we noticed that all the four daughters were raised by their own mothers.

Two cases seem to suggest a trend, if we look at today's prevailing phenomena. In one case the old generation mother paid much attention to her daughter's preschool education; in the other the old generation woman refused to take care of her grandchildren.

Socialization of daughters and the expectations between mothers and daughters

It was clear for most of the old generation women that their future largely depended on the men they were going to marry and the families, pojia, they were going to live in. All the training they received in their own families was aimed at meeting the requirement of a good wife and a daughter-in-law. They were taught how to cook, how to make all kind of pickles and salted meat. Their capability of needlework and other domestic arts were an important criteria for judging their value and quality.

Few of the 20 old generation women had their feet bound when they were children but were unbound later. These feet, no longer normal, were called semi-big feet, bandajiao. Nevertheless, the women's manners had to be as gentle and submissive as the women with bound feet. They should not run but walk with gently good posture. They must not speak or laugh loudly. The requirements and expectation of their parents towards them were totally different from their brothers.

It is also clear for the city women of the young generation that their future will mostly depend on themselves. Good performance at school guarantees higher education that will raise their social status in due course. Both boys and girls are required to study hard and get high marks. The parents try to send them to better schools. The earlier the parents start to plan for the future the better the chance the children have for going to universities, that is the goal for most city parents.

In China, it is common for the parents, who work and live in the suburbs, to let their children, boys or girls to stay with their grandparents in the city in order to send them to better schools. Both Z.F.'s daughter and son stayed with Z.F.'s parents for nine years, from the third year of primary school to middle school graduation, because Z.F. and her husband lived in their unit's dormitory in the suburbs, where there was no good school nearby. The children went home every weekend and at each school vacations. Y.H. and R.L. also sent their daughters to stay with their mothers for some years for the same purpose.

L.F. was assigned to work in a small county. She left her daughter with her grandma in Z city to attend the city school, which was of much higher quality than the county city. The girl lived with her grandma until the grandma passed away when she was nine years old.

The socialization pattern of the old generation women has lasted for centuries and the pattern of the younger generation might continue for generations to come. The middle generation women, though, experienced the turning point of the cultural transformation. They were the first generation girls of the "new China". Spontaneously, many of the old ways that helped shape the old generation women into "little women" must be abandoned. Attention to the appearance of young girls: nice dress, pretty face or good shapes began to be considered as bourgeois thought. However, the parents were not quite sure what kind of persons their daughters would become in the future.

Girls of the middle generation, who were expected to "hold up half the sky", were supposed to have the same training and education as the boys. They were no longer required to learn needlework. They were asked or volunteered to help their mothers to do domestic chores. Now, most middle age women praise

their mother's skill of sewing, tailoring or making pickles. But they do not feel sorry that these skills have not passed to themselves. Unlike their daughters, they were not under the great pressure of academic competition either. Their parents paid almost no attention to their performance at school. As long as the teacher did not turn to the parents to complain, everything was fine. In fact all the 20 middle generation girls, with different academic performance at school, never got their parents in trouble.

C.K. Yang argues that the fundamental change in family did not originate with the communist regime but was under way before the communist movement (Yang, 1972: vi). Many of the old generation women learned how to read and write from their brothers, who had an opportunity to go to school. H.F.'s mother learned to read the bible in church. She could not recognize characters without the context of the bible. An interesting similar phenomenon was that many years later her granddaughter could only read the characters in the context of Chairman Mao's little red book in the first two years of her schooling.

The fact that both the girls and the boys were urged to have good academic achievement does not mean that the parents' had the same expectations of both the sons and the daughters and thus the boys and the girls received the same socialization at home. A girl could be laughed at if she showed a boyish personality: laughed loudly or ran around the house. The adults might jokingly call her "mad slave girl" (Feng yatuo). But nobody would be seriously worried that her inappropriate behavior might jeopardize her good marriage opportunity.

The twenty middle age girls graduated from junior middle school in the Summer of 1957, when the anti-rightist campaign started and the city was overshadowed by the dismal political atmosphere. The publication of the list of

students, who would be admitted by higher level schools was postponed again and again. When the longed-for list came out, all the parents and the students were astonished. It turn out that only 4 of the 21 girls in that class were admitted by senior middle schools. The girls were only 15 to 17 years old, too young to start working. The Party called on them to settle down to the countryside: "Go to where the motherland needs you and contribute your youth to the cause of socialist construction".

In the cases of this study, the mothers seemed to resigned to thier fate more than the fathers. In the meanwhile many of them sincerely supported the Party's calls. Many of the old generation women felt gratitude to the Party for raising their status at home and in the society. They were less suspect to the rightness of the ideology promoted by the government and the Party (until the Cultural Revolution).

Six girls decided to leave their home for the villages. But two of them, persuaded by their fathers, changed their mind and did not go in the end. H.F. was one of them. Her father told her: "You stupid girl. You do not know what the countryside is like. The life there is bitter. You will suffer to death".

Most of the moral education they received at school did not really conflict with the repeated instructions and lectures they heard from their parents: be good, kind, obedient, discreet, humble, honest, industrious and thrifty. The teachers, books or media never stopped instilling many new concepts, ideas and doctrines into them. The prevailing ideological promotion was the theory of class struggle and the shift of one's loyalty from the family to the Party. People, even one's own parents, must be judged by their background, by whether they used to belong to the exploiting class. In chapter VII I will discuss to what degree, if any, this

orthodox ideology was accepted by the girls because the results of socialization can only be tested later when the family went through political upheaval.

In their daily lives, however, despite the Party's doctrine of "father is dear, mother is dear, but Chairman Mao is the dearest" filial piety was still a virtue and highly praised by the society. In case the parents were condemned by the authorities as "class enemies" or became the targets of political campaign, their friends and relatives usually avoided commenting on the children's position openly but advocated between themselves that the children should still respect their parents and take care of them.

The old generation parents usually would not directly ask their daughters to be grateful to them for their grace. Among her 20 girl classmates, G.X. was the only one who was frequently reminded by her parents about her indebtedness. When she asked for money to buy a pencil or other stationery, she was required to write a note of guarantee, saying that she appreciated the favour of her parents, promised to study hard and would become a useful person in the future treating the parents well when they became old.

Other middle generation women do not remember that their parents emphasized filial piety or openly denied the Party's demand for the people's loyalty either. Nevertheless, judging by the behaviour of the daughters of this generation, unmarried or married, every single one of them has a high opinion of filial piety or has tried to be a filial daughter and become sad if she failed to be one. They felt strongly about their obligations and duties as a daughter. Some of them were even willing to sacrifice their own happiness to please their parents. Z.Y's marriage decision, which I will describe in the next chapter, is a good example.

It was not surprising that not one of the middle generation women was told by her mother about menstruation. The funny and interesting stories of the first menses were well remembered by each of them. S.H. was fighting with her brother the night before. She complained to her mother that her brother cut her leg when she found there was some blood on her bed and legs. Some of them heard about the mysterious monthly period ,yuejing, from their girl friends but they felt ashamed and too embarrassed to tell their mothers when they started to experience it.

I did not expect that nobody from the middle generation women, not even the two doctors and three teachers, had tried to explain to their daughters about menstruation. "They were taught about it in school", was the mothers' excuse. Vaguely aware of the sex-related nature of menstruation, the girls did not venture to ask about it. R.F.'s daughter, who was very frightened by the bleeding, was comforted by her grandma. She told her that the first menses were called "happy coming" (laixi), which meant she was ready to become a mother someday. She did not give R.F. the same explanation. Maybe, when her granddaughter came of age, she was old enough not to be embarrassed to talk a little bit about sex.

Menstruation, contraception and all the organs related to reproduction were never mentioned in the mother conversation with their daughters. When they were young, the middle generation women could not imagine drying their underwear in the sunshine, seen by others, especially by men, because their mothers never did it. For the young generation, however, it is not a taboo any more.

A few of the fathers of the young generation seemed to be less reluctant to give sexual education to their daughters. H.F.'s husband explained to the two

daughter why they had a period. "It is a natural thing, just like everybody has a nose and mouth", he told them.

Mother's image in the eyes of the daughter

R.L. works in a documentary unit at a research institute. She is a woman of average intelligence, social status and popularity. In the eyes of her teenage daughter, however, she is one of the most capable people. The daughter turns to R.L. whenever she encounters trouble. " I have adored my mother since I was a little girl. She is great. Indeed, she is very great".

G.X., a retired factory cadre, is a marvellous character in her daughter's eye. " My mother is amazing. She can see through me like I am made of glass. Once, when I was at middle school, I played truant and went to watching a movie. But as soon as my mother saw me that evening she found out!" G.X.'s daughter graduated from university and started to work in a company a year ago. G.X. is her consultant for almost everything that happens in her office. " There is a middle-age woman working in the same office as me. When I had just met her, I liked her very much because she was very kind to me and told me many things. I also told her frankly what I thought. My mother warned me that I should be careful with this woman and must not trust her. Before too long, I found this woman reporting my complaint against the head of our section to him!"

G.X. only graduated from junior middle school. She is capable and has been promoted to the head of the workshop in the factory. She was nominated as a candidate for vice director of the factory, but she refused and retired as soon as she reached her fiftieth birthday so she could look after her grandson. She believes that a woman's place is at home. Her husband used to be the director of a factory.

He has won a few national invention prizes and is very much respected by his co-workers. Obviously, the husband enjoyed higher social status than G.X. But in the eyes of their two daughters G.X. is more competent and has wiser opinions. (The day I was interviewing G.X. and her younger daughter, her husband was cooking lunch for us. According to G.X., her husband does most of the cooking at home, but when they visit G.X.'s parents on Sundays, G.X. and her sisters do the cooking. Her husband chats with other brothers-in-law.

G.X.' daughter has very high opinion of her mother and does not judge her mother by her education, social status or competence or compared her with her father by these categories.

Examining the 20 case, I found that one fact influenced the mother's image in the eyes of the daughters tremendously. That was the mother's role among the relatives, in the circle of whom the daughter grew up. Both R.L. and G.X. enjoy a high reputation among their own brothers and sisters. R.L is the eldest sister of four siblings. Compared with her other sisters, she has better education, higher social status and is closer to her parents. G.X's parents, especially the mother, would turn to her for advice. She is respected by her siblings because she always cares about them. She worked as a school teacher in a county for 8 years after she married. During those years she came back to Z city approximately once every two months.

Every time I came back, holding my baby in front of me I carried a big basket on my back, full of eggs, pork, oil and other food. I gave half the food to my own family and half to my husband's family.

R.L's daughter grew up with her maternal cousins. Like most of the teenage girls I interviewed, she has a personal album. Most of the pictures were

taken of herself with her cousins. The weekend programme of R.L. and her daughter is a routine visit to R.L's parents and the families of R.L's sisters also go too. R.L is called Dayima (Big aunty) by her nephews and nieces and is respected by the younger generation and her own sisters. R.L.'s daughter is proud of her mother. G.X, Y.L., M.Z. and Y.H. are all very popular among the relatives and thus have won their daughters' respect.

Mother's influence and mother's love

Compared with the middle generation mothers, the old generation women usually interfered less in the young daughters' own affairs, her education, behavior and decision-making. Chinese children and juvenile were considered "the motherland's flowers", and the gardeners were the teachers in school but not the parents themselves. The 1950s was the era when everybody who had lived in the "old society" had to have their brain washed and had to learn to accept new ideas. The mothers who were housewives and did not attend political studies regularly hesitated to give advice to their daughters because they were not sure whether their opinions were out of date. They would scold or even beat the daughters if they failed to carry out their duties of domestic chores well or spent too much time playing, but they seldom lectured their daughters in other spheres. They lacked confidence not just because they were still more or less the subordinate members at home, but also, as mentioned above, as the women from the old society with an "old brain", they were not sure about their own judgement.

Less interference caused less conflicts. Almost all the middle generation girls had a harmonious relation with their mothers. According to the political and moral education they received at school and from the media, neither their fathers nor their mothers were the models they should look up to. The difference between

their mothers and the national heroes or heroines they were told to emulate was too great and beyond comparison with their own parents or even anybody they contacted in their daily life. A daughters did not expect to have a mother who could meet the standards of a modern woman set by the Party and the government. Therefore, they did not feel sorry for having a mother with an "old brain" or who had no formal education. Compared to the middle generation mothers the old generation women won more love and respect from their daughters, in spite of the higher education they received and the higher social status they enjoyed.

The fact that the old generation mothers could not serve as examples for their daughters does not mean that the daughters did not identify with their mothers. Three middle generation women lost their mothers when she was were children. Among the rest of 17 women, 9 believe that their mothers were the most influential person in their lives. They told their mothers' life stories with great affection, respect and admiration. They were proud of their mothers and felt gratitude to their mothers for the kind of persons they have become today. The daughters specially attributed the characters they inherited to their mothers. Among other personal traits, courage, diligence, kindness, tolerance and adaptability were highlighted by many of them. These women have graduated from at least junior middle school. Some of them obtained the senior middle school level later by self-taught. Their mothers had no or very little school education. Nevertheless, most of them believe that they are not as capable and kind as their mothers used to be.

The material life was tougher for the middle generation women when they were young. Many of them felt strongly about the sacrifices their mothers made for them. Y.H. always recalled with emotion that when she was at middle school, her mother had to work day and night for two shifts. Once, her mother woke her

up in the midnight and gave her a bowl of noodle to eat. Still asleep, she finished the delicious food and then realized that it was her mother's dinner. The noodles with pork were a kind of reward for her mother's over time work.

The Influence of mothers on the daughters happened spontaneously. The old generation mothers no longer considered that they ought to cultivate their daughters with a feminine personality, but, like mother, like daughter, their own personality, mentality and behaviour influenced their daughters in many ways. The social environments for the growing up of these two generations were so different. The societal and parental expectations of the girls of these two generations were different. Therefore, the socialization they received was not the same. Nevertheless, the similarities of the mother and the daughter are impressive. According to the questionnaires filled out by the daughters of the middle generation, most of the daughters shared the same beliefs, norms and values with their mothers. Belief in destiny is the most prevailing concept in the two generations. When the daughter was close to the mother, the influence of the mother usually became greater.

By the time the young generation women came of age, the Chinese society had awoken from the Communist illusion. Gone with the Cultural Revolution, the ideology promoted by the Party no longer appealed to the Chinese people. The adolescents and the youth in the country no longer looked up to the heroes or heroines as their models. Very few of them were still idealists. Compared with their mothers' generation, they adopted a more down to earth attitude and realized that they would become somebody just like their mother or father. Therefore, they started to judge their mothers by the standards they have set for themselves in the future. Unlike the first mother-daughter dyad, her relations with her mother could be largely influenced by whether the mother lived up to her own goals. She could

be critical towards her mother, if the mother did not have the qualities she looked forward to obtaining.

R.F.'s daughter preferred working in a factory as an ordinary worker rather than becoming a primary school teacher like R.F. She told me that she despised her mother and her colleagues, because they behaved like housewives, enjoyed exchanging gossip and had bad taste in many things such as clothes. "Please do not tell my mother. She will fly into a rage, if she knows I look down on her", she told me.

Unlike the middle generation women, some of the young generation daughters started to judge their parents by the knowledge, capability and social status of their mothers. If the father was a better person in the eyes of the daughter, she would respect him more than her mother and pay more attention to his opinions. But she still turned to her mother more than to her father and spent more time with her mother because the mother usually is more available and willing to listen as well as to help. Their attitude could be changed when they became more mature, especially after they married and became mothers themselves. We will discuss this phenomenon later.

H.F.'s two daughters adore their father very much. When people intend to introduce boyfriends to them, they always ask whether the boy is like their own father. They have close relations with H.F., but they believe that their father is wiser than their mother in many ways.

One of the most serious choices the young generation daughters had to face was the selection of school of higher levels. It was usually the family's decision. In most cases the mother spent more time than anybody in the family

investigating and talking with teachers, friends and relatives and then made the decision with the father. In some families, where the mother had the final say, the father just listened to the mother's opinion and seconded it. The daughters believed that their parents knew what was the best for them and seldom raised objections. In fact, in most occasions it was not a simple decision-making procedure, but involved a lot of effort in knocking open the "back door".

Another crucial thing was finding a job for the daughter, who had graduated from school or failed to be accepted by a higher level school. It was a tough test of the mother's capability. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the job market was not functioning in China, the future of young women seemed to depend on the first job they had and the work unit they managed to enter. All the mothers would do their best to get their daughters recruited by a good unit. When they failed, the mother would try to get the daughter transferred to a better one in due course.

In their childhood or adolescence, the daughters might be too young to understand their mothers' selfless love and the sacrifices the mothers made for them. Now, the growing up daughters were deeply moved by their mothers, who were obsessed by the daughters' well being and tirelessly worked for their benefit.

For most teenage girls of both the middle and young generation women, their mothers were the most important persons in their lives. L.F. remembered well the day when she learned that her mother was suffering from cancer. She thought that her mother was going to die and, for her, it was the end of the world. She went to see her mother in the hospital every day after school. Thinking about her mother day and night, she had no interest to eating or studying. She lost weight

day after day. Before too long the doctor found L.F. was sick too, suffering from hyperthyroidism that was caused by shock and anxiety.

Among the daughters of these two generations only one daughter felt that she was disliked and abused by her mother (see Chapter VII).

Daughter as mother's assistant

The middle generation women became their mothers' assistants at a very early age. It was natural for the girls to give hand to their extremely busy mothers. How early they started to help their mothers and how much time they spent on the work depended on both the need, their mother's attitude and the personality of both the mothers and the daughters. The eldest daughters usually did more domestic chores than their siblings because of the real need at the family.

Y.H.'s father passed away when she was 13 years old. Her mother had to raise their 6 children alone. The youngest son was only 3 years old. All the girls shared the domestic work. Y.H., the eldest, was responsible for helping her mother do the laundry. Every Sunday, Y.H. and her mother went to the well in a lane near their house. Many other neighbors were also there doing their weekend washing. They usually worked the whole day because they had to draw water from the well, bucket after bucket, by hand. The day Y.H. had her first menstruation was a Sunday. She was doing the laundry with her mother as usual. She was exhausted by the end of the day and felt dizzy. Her mother panicked after she saw the blood in Y.H.'s pants, because one should not put one's hands in cold water during a period. Then she carried Y.H. on her back and took her to see the doctor. Many years later, when washing machines were available in Z city for the first time, Y.H. used all her savings to buy one. She sent her daughter to her mother to get

her laundry and wash it in the machine. The Sunday laundry was the most unforgettable thing of Y.H.'s adolescence, which haunted her for years.

For the middle generation women, doing domestic work was also a part of socialization. A good girl was supposed to be hard working at home and a useful helper to her mother. But for the young generation, it was not a necessary criterion for judging a girl's conduct. A mother would be happy, of course, if her daughter was willing to help or love do cooking. But she would not be sorry if the daughter was a good student and was accepted by a university but hated doing any domestic chores. A middle generation woman told me that her daughter was very lazy at home and worked hard at school. She did not sound as if she were scolding or regretted this. Except for a very few, the young generation women still do more domestic work than their brothers. The daughters were all helping their fathers or mothers cook when I was treated at their houses.

Helping the mothers ease their burden was a concern for the daughters of both the middle and young generations. In addition to giving a hand to their mothers some of them also tried to earn money or to save money for the sake of their families. At the age of 14 R.L. earned her pocket money by knitting. Z.Y.'s daughter began to make a few dollars when she was only five years old. Following the neighbors in their yard, she went to a pickle mill to do a part time job, cutting off the chilli stems. Z.Y. felt happy as well as sad when her daughter handed her the money with her small red hands burned by the hot chilli.

R.F.'s case is very typical.

"From the age of eight onwards, I was responsible for most domestic chores. We used to eat twice a day, about 10 o'clock in the morning and 6 p.m. in the afternoon. My mother left early in the morning

without eating anything. I cooked the morning meal for my father and myself. We had no clock at home. I would check with neighbors about the time and go to meet my mother at about 10:00 a.m., I carried a small basket with me. If my mother did not sell all the vegetables, I would put some in my basket and make my mother's load lighter."

Communication between mother and daughter

The middle generation women had more egalitarian and intimate relationship with their mothers than with their fathers. Influenced by the experience of their own childhood and youth, the fathers believed that they should keep the authority of a father or they subconsciously imitated their own fathers' style. Thus, their attitude towards the children was more or less aloof and serious. Usually, the daughters liked to turn to their mothers when they had something to tell or to ask for, and consulted their fathers for important decisions. The fathers were usually not involved in daily trivialities. However, in case where the mother had a strong personality and the father was the opposite, such as in H.F.'s and R.F.'s families, the daughter might turn to either of the parents when they needed an adult's help or advice. (Wolf: 1977:90-137).

The situation has changed greatly within the last few decades. The husbands of the middle generation women have obviously become more casual with their children than their fathers were. They shared the wives' duty in the domestic chores and the rearing of children to a certain degree. The solemn long face of the old generation father that shadowed the family dinner table can only be seen in the movies or in novels. Nevertheless the younger generation daughters still communicate more with their mothers than with their fathers.

As the mothers' assistants at home, the daughters spent a lot of time with their mothers. The daughters also joined their mothers in other family activities such as shopping and visiting relatives, in most cases the mothers' relatives. While they were together, the mothers sometimes told their daughters about their own childhood or stories about their relatives. Only two women of the old generation confided their feelings about their husbands to their daughters. In both cases the mothers were unhappy with the marriage and regretted marrying their husbands. When the marriage was happy and they did not need to pour out their grievance, they usually did not talk about it. L.F.'s mother eloped with her father to Japan to avoid an arranged marriage. The romance created a sensation in Z city. But L.F. only learned about it from a relative after her mother passed away.

In Z city breakfast is not a main meal. If the family can afford it, the children are given some money to buy a steamed bun or other simple food. People come home for lunch everyday, so there are two family gatherings each day, at noon and in the evening. When the old generation were young, the children were not allowed to talk at the lunch or dinner table. "Do not talk during a meal, do not speak in the bed" (Chi bu yun, shui bu yu) was an old family admonition. But the middle generation women had different experience from family to family. In some families, the discussion over the lunch table was quite lively, the boys as well as the girls could freely express themselves in front of their parents. In some families, however, the children could just listen but not speak unless they were asked to. There is a special term for the girl who cuts her parents short: "intruding slave girl" (chaba yatou).

The situation changed tremendously with the young generation. The father's or grandfather's absolute authority, which in the old days was felt by all the family members at every meal, has disappeared. The lunch table conversations

are dominated by talkative girls in many families. They report the school news and comment on their teachers and classmates. They argue with the parents about current affairs. They make jokes with their parents. That was unimaginable two generations ago.

On the one hand, the girls feel less restrained in front of their parents and are more outspoken than their mothers used to be. On the other hand, because many girls of the young generation no longer share the same values as their mothers, the two generations have more problems to understand and communicate to each other.

Summary

The socialization of the daughters by the mothers was carried out in two ways. One way was disciplining and teaching, which was affected by the mothers' expectation of the their daughters. In fact a more effective form of the socialization was functioning through the mothers's example, their behaviour and through the contact between the mothers and their daughters. Hundreds of the skills needed in the women's daily life as well as the cultural norms guiding their behaviour were passed on from the mothers to the daughters quietly from generation to generation. The daughters' positive feelings for their mothers created a smooth channel for the transmission of these skills, cultural traits and norms.

The middle generation mothers felt that they could communicate better and had more common language with their mothers rather than with their daughters. The situation was attributed to the change of values in the society of mainland China which have happened since the late 1980s. Besides, the mother-daughter relationship of the first dyad is more harmonious than the second, because both

the mothers and the daughters of the first pair have more pragmatic expectations of each other. The daughters were capable helpers for their busy mothers, they experienced more love and care given by their mothers due to the facts that the mothers were family-oriented women and the life in China was difficult in those years. Most of the old generation women went through ups and downs and bravely faced their fate. They accepted all the misfortunes with great courage and handled whatever happened in the best way they could. Thus, they have won their daughters respect and admiration.

The daughters of both generations spent more time and communicated more with their mothers than with their fathers. The atmosphere in the family became more liberal generation after generation. The daughters were encouraged to exchange views with their parents. They were no longer afraid of talking or arguing with their parents, and were more active and more outspoken at home. Some of them could be rather critical of their parents. The decline of the patriarchal order in the family was obviously reflected in the family relations of the two dyads. In the meanwhile, filial piety remains a virtue in the cultural norm. The women of the three generations basically share the same views with regard to the roles of a daughter and a mother. They pay more attention to their commitment and obligations rather than their rights as mothers and daughters and thus enjoy a harmonious mother- daughter relations.

VI MOTHERS AND THEIR MARRIED DAUGHTERS

Mother and her daughter's choice of mate

Only one of the 20 old generation women married through "free love". She and her lover had to go to the extreme -- elopement. All the middle generation women, however, married according to their own choice and wishes and not as their mothers once did through the arrangement of the match-makers. Compared with the middle generation, the young generation women have a more open attitude towards sex and the decision to marry is their own affair. However, the parents, particularly the mother, still played an role in their choice of mate.

The mothers usually would not directly advise their daughters on what kind of man they should marry. They expressed their opinions by making comments on other married men or the marriages of their relatives and friends. The mothers liked to bring up this topic in the conversation in front of their daughters. "Zhonghou laoshi", which means honest, sincere, tolerant, hard-working but not too smart, was considered to be the best quality of a marriage partner.

When the daughter was reaching the marriageable age, "Zhao duixian", finding a marriage partner, would become one of the main concerns for her mother. She quietly observed the daughter's behavior but would not ask her whether she already had a boy friend. She did not have to mention her desire to find a marriage partner for her daughter to her relatives, friends or colleagues. Everybody would know and many of them would volunteer to look for a suitable candidate for the daughter. When the mother accepted the recommendation she would cautiously mention it in front of her daughter in order to get her agreement

to arrange a meeting. In most cases, the person who make the recommendation would take the boy to visit the girl's family. After the crucial first meeting if the young woman and man had a good impression of each other and wanted to become friends the mother and her their enthusiastic friends would leave the young people alone and curiously watch developments. In the twenty cases of this study, however, many mothers tried to find marriage partners for their daughters but only two of them succeeded.

From quite a few candidates her friends and relatives recommended to her M.Z.'s mother selected one man as M.Z.'s potential marriage partner. He was the deputy manager of a department store and had a good income. But that was not enough for M.Z.'s mother. She first arranged a meeting between the man and M.Z. to make sure that they were acceptable to each other. Then she started to interview the man's colleagues as well as his subordinates. Every time she came back from a interview, she told M.Z. all the details. It seemed everyone liked him and respected him. M.Z. became more and more impressed by her mother's reports and fell in love with him before too long. M.Z.'s mother also assisted M.Z.'s five sisters in searching for their fiances and had a high record of success. Being the chairman of the neighborhood committee for many years, she knew a lot of people and was a good sense judge of character.

For the daughters the parents' approval of their marriage is still very important. The parents are likely to say yes in the end. But sometimes it takes the daughter months or years to persuade them. Mothers are usually more sympathetic to the daughters position than fathers when there is disagreement between generations in the choice of mates.

The mother's effort in searching for a good marriage partner for her daughter could fail as we said above. But her involvement puts her in a better position to make a judgement than her husband. Therefore the mothers' opinions usually take precedence over the fathers'.

Y.H.'s boy friend was her colleague at the middle school she worked. When Y.H. brought him to meet her mother for the first time, she did not like him. "look, how skinny he is. He might be a sick man." Y.H. understood that her mother was not happy because Y.H. rejected her mother's recommendation of a friend's son. In that summer vacation Y.H. planned to go to her boy friend's home city to meet his family. But now, since her mother did not agree with the marriage, she stayed in Z city and the boy friend went home by himself. Y.H. told her mother: "Ok, since you do not like him, forget about it." A week later her boy friend sent a telegram to Y.H., asking her to join him. Y.H. showed the cable to her mother without saying anything. Her mother then compromised and approved their marriage.

In two cases the mothers were widowed by the time the daughters reached marriageable age. The mother then became the target of the future son-in-laws. S.H. had a boy friend who was a driver. After ^{knowing} dating him for two years (without intimacy) S.H. decided to break up with him. The young driver did not give up but did his best to please S.H.'s mother. Every time he drove his truck via the town where S.H.'s mother lived, he went to visit her and took some gifts: eggs, fruits or other rarely supplied food. He also took S.H.'s brother out to play. His strategy worked. Y.H.'s mother believed that he would be the right husband for her daughter and she tried to persuade S.H. to change her mind. She told S.H. that the driver had been her boy friend for quite some time so if they broke up now S.H.'s reputation could be affected. She also reminded S.H. that since she had a bad

family background she should also marry somebody with a similar family background to this driver otherwise S.H. could be bullied in the family. This reason was more convincing for Y.H.. "I was a person who had no definite views of my own, so I married him".

Z.Y. was working in a factory in Z city, while her father and step-mother lived in another city. She had a boy friend who was a skilled worker at the same factory. Like most girls of her age, she did not tell her parents about her boy friend. Her step-mother was worried about her marriage and tried to find a marriage partner for her. Through a relative of hers she met a young man, who served in the army as a driver, whom she thought was right for Z.Y.. Then she, an old woman with bound feet, traveled all the way to Z city to arrange the marriage. Z.Y. did not want to break up with her boy friend, but she found it very difficult to refuse her step-mother's kindness. She explained the situation to her boy friend. She told me, "My boy friend understood my situation well. Because she was my step-mother, if I did not obey her, she would be deeply hurt. My relationship with her would be ruined".

She then married the soldier. By the time Z.Y. told her life story, her marriage had encountered many problems. She told me that her former boy friend became a self-taught engineer. However, she had no regrets about following her step-mother's arrangement. "That was the right thing to do at the time. This is my destiny, anyway".

The pattern of the mother's influence on the daughter's marriage has not changed significantly from the first dyad to the second one. The mother's role as a consultant and as a help in searching for the daughter's marriage partner remained the same. The mothers acted skillfully, with a low profile as their own mothers

did for them once. The mother's approval for the daughter's choice was still necessary. But the mother would usually give her blessing and consent to the marriage by the end anyway. But in the second dyad the parents' opinions can not control the daughter's marriage any more. The cases of Z.Y. and S.H. cannot be found among the young generation. The family revolution, which was launched in China early this century and which was marked by the freedom of marriage, has finally been completed in in this generation among the urban population.

Nine young daughters had married by the time this study was conducted. The case of Q.C. reflects the typical involvement of the middle generation women in their daughters' marriage decision. Q.C.'s daughter was a nurse. She fell in love with a patient in the ward she worked on. Q.C. believed that the man, who was a worker and not in good health, did not match her daughter at all. Q.C. tried to persuade her daughter not to marry him, explaining patiently all the reasons for her objection to the marriage. But her daughter insisted and told Q.C. that she would marry him simply because they loved each other. Then, reluctantly, Q.C. agreed and, using the family savings, helped to prepare the wedding for her daughter.

Y.L.'s case was an extreme one. As a school teacher in the countryside, she lived in a rural society, where the cultural context was different from the city. Y.L. was not happy when she noticed her younger daughter frequently went to watch movies on the basketball ground in the evenings with a group of boys and girls of her own age. Y.L. was worried that her daughter might be taken advantage of by some young men and become pregnant. "It would be the most disgraceful and troublesome thing". Then she forbade her daughter from going out in the evening and scolded or even beat her if her daughter defied the curfew. Her daughter

attempted to commit suicide at the age of 15 by taking pesticide after Y.L. beat her again.

One family in the neighborhood was very much interested in her daughter as a potential marriage partner for their son. They bought clothes for Y.L.'s daughter and tried to please her. One night, when she found that her daughter had gone to the neighbour's place, Y.L. became furious and took a shoulder pole with her and waited outside the house. When her daughter and the other boys and girls came out laughing, Y.L. dashed to her daughter, calling her names and beating her with the pole. Then she rushed into the house and abused the parents of the boy for seducing her daughter.

Two years later, the thing Y.L. feared so much happened. Her daughter, who began to work in another town, became involved with a man eleven years older than her and who was married, with two children. When the scandal reached Y.L., she wasted no time and went to her daughter's work unit and beat her ruthlessly in front of her colleagues. She failed to stop the romance. Her daughter became pregnant and had dilatation and curettage operation. Finally, the man decided to divorce his wife and he married Y.L.'s daughter when she became pregnant again. Y.L. helped her daughter to arrange an induced abortion, but still did not give her approval for the marriage. Instead, she started to look for the right marriage partner for her daughter. The daughter refused all the candidates one after another. She told Y.L.: "You marry them yourself if you like them". Y.L. compromised at last and agreed to let them marry after the man divorced. When the man came to see Y.L. with his divorce certificate, Y.L. told him the other conditions of her approval of the marriage: he must not beat her, he must not have affairs with other women, her daughter must give birth to a child, even if they had to pay the one thousand yuan fine for a extra-quota baby. After they married, Y.L.

summoned the son-in-law every so often to lecture him. She found that he had changed and was good to Y.L.'s daughter and helpful to Y.L.'s whole family.

Financial support of natal family by adult daughter

As mentioned above, ten of the twenty middle generation women started to work after they graduated from junior middle school between the ages of 15 and 17. The apprentice's salary was 18 yuan a month, hardly enough to cover very basic expenditure. But many of them saved every penny so that they were able to hand a few yuan to their mothers each month. When they passed the three-year probation and became a formal worker they usually earned 32 to 36 yuan a month. Those, who graduated from a secondary technical school, had the same wage. After three years most of them began to earn 42 yuan a month. University graduates earned 46 for the first year and the salary was raised to 56 from the beginning of the second year.

Table 2 The monthly contribution of the girls to their families when they began to earn salaries

Unit: Yuan

Name	Salary	Gave family	Percent
Y.C.	46	20	43.5%
J.K.	33	5	15.2%
Q.C.	17	17	100.0%
Y.L.	24	8	33.3%
Z.P.	18	5	27.8%
C.Z.	32	5	15.6%
H.L.	32	8	25.0%
M.Z.	18	18	100.0%
L.F.	42	15	35.7%
S.T.	46	15	32.6%
S.H.	32	10	31.3%
Z.F.	46	10	21.7%
G.X.	35	17	48.6%
Y.R.	10	0	0.0%
R.F.	32	5	15.6%
Y.F.	46	15	32.6%
Z.Y.	32	5	15.6%
H.F.	32	15	46.9%
R.L.	46	10	21.7%
Y.H.	46	10	21.7%

Q.C. and M.Z. gave all of their salary to their mothers who then gave them a monthly allowance just like when they were at school. In a few cases, where the daughters bought things for the family instead of giving them money. The daughters' contribution in form of money or gifts was usually the same in value. All the women interviewed remember clearly how much they earned and how

much they gave to their parents. The money was handed to the mother because she was in charge of the family's expenditure. Most of the daughters tried to contribute as much as they could to their family. The fact that they could finally help the family and ease the burden of their parents pleased them more than the feeling that they had become financially independent.

Whether they still continue to share their salary with their family after they have married depends on the need of the woman's natal family and the financial situation of her own "small" family. The situation of being a "married out" daughter and a daughter-in-law of another family does not influence her financial support of her natal family in a great deal, especially before she has a child. Even she stops giving money to her parents regularly, her financial relations with her natal family are never suspended.

Q.C. was married to an army official, who sent her 40 yuan a month for her and her new-born baby. Every month, she bought meal tickets for her five step-brothers and step-sisters in her work unit's canteen. She was glad that she could help her widowed step mother to support the family more after she married.

Many of the middle generation women were assigned to work in the counties or suburbs for some years. The food supply in these places was better than in the city. Before they married, each of their home visiting trips was an opportunity to bring oil, meat, sugar, eggs soap or other local food product to their families. After they married, they usually shared the gifts between their natal family and their husband's family. Y.C.'s husband complained that she cared too much about her natal family. Other husbands seemed to take the situation for granted.

When the young generation began to earn a salary, the economic situation in the country as a whole had improved significantly. Besides, the parents were either still working or lived on their own pensions, which were more than the salary of their daughters in the 1980s. Some parents still required the daughter to give a certain sum of money, about one third to an quarter of her salary in most cases. Their contribution had a symbolic meaning rather than that of practical need. "To test their filial piety". The mothers believed that it was their duty to teach the daughters to save money, to be grateful to their parents and to set a good example for their brothers or sisters. As a matter of fact, some mothers saved the money for their daughters' need in the future. They did the same for their sons.

The young generation women did not feel obliged to share their salary with their parents. They bought gifts, clothes or food for their mothers to show their concern for their mothers and to please their mothers. Among the nineteen young generation daughters who had a paid job, the situation was quite diverse in terms of gift-giving. How much the daughter contributed depended on her relationship with her mother and her own personality. Her economic situation did not fundamentally affect the quantity of financial assistance to her parents . The typical response to my question about the financial contribution was: "My parents have their retirement pension and they live a very simple life so they do not need money." . In cases where they gave money to their natal family they always handed the money to their mothers, just like their mothers did to their own mothers.

Mother's role when her daughter becomes a mother

The first month after the birth of a child was of crucial importance for the rest of the mother's life. This idea passes from generation to generation among the

women in China. Most of the physical sufferings of old women are attributed to carelessness during this period. The headache of an old woman is caused by the wind blowing her unwrapped head in that crucial month. Touching cold water results in arthritis. A woman's health after she gives birth to a baby is determined by the food she eats and her physical behaviour during that month, when the women must be lying in confinement. It is called *zuo yuezi*, sitting through the month.

The rules regulating a woman's food and behaviour during her *yuezi* have only slightly changed from the first to the third generation of women in this study. One of the basic rules, for example, is that she should not be directly exposed to the wind. This means all the windows and doors in the room she is lying must not be open. To avoid any breeze she must have her head wrapped with cloth or wear a cap. She must not touch cold water. Even the water for rinsing her mouth should be warm, otherwise she will have "sour" teeth when she becomes old. Having a bath or shower and even washing her hair are all forbidden within this month. The taboo of food is different from family to family. Some women are not allowed to eat vegetables, but most of them just exclude a few kinds of vegetables from their diet. Eggs and chickens were considered to be the most useful and nutritious food. They usually are required to eat 6 to 10 eggs each day. The number of chickens they eat during the month depends on the family's and the society's economic situation. It is from 2 to 12 in the cases of this study.

The rules became less strict with the younger generation. New methods for the care of women after giving birth were introduced. Nevertheless, the above-mentioned traditional way is still applicable and widely accepted by the women interviewed, even if they are doctors themselves. "The experience of the old generation is still useful", they said. When it comes to having a baby, the mother

knows more than the daughter. The mother's role as an instructor and care-giver during the daughter's confinement and the one month of recovery, *zuo yuezi*, has been exactly the same in both the middle and the young generations.

The relationship between a mother and her daughter becomes much closer during this month. The daughters were moved by their mothers' intensive and meticulous care of them, the mothers' tireless effort of being helpful and their self-sacrifice. The daughters listened to the mothers' instructions and advice carefully. The mothers were more than willing to share their own experiences, and the stories they heard from their own mothers, with their daughters. The mothers and the daughters found that they had never had so much to talk to each other about before. The daughters, both of the middle and the young generations, think that they understood their mothers better after they became mothers themselves. It confirms a Chinese saying: "You can only understand your parents' feelings for you after you become a parent". For some daughters, this period made them identify with their mothers again.

Mother's position in her married daughter's family

Among the 20 old generation women, four died young and did not live to see their daughters' wedding; eight lived with their husbands after their children married and moved out from their homes, another eight women were already widowed by the time their daughters got married. Seven of the eight widowed women lived with their married daughters and only one lived with her still single son.

Y.H.'s mother, who grew up in a county, felt embarrassed about living with one of her married daughter. "How can one live with her daughter's family. People

do not do it". Her children told her that many people lived with their married daughters. She then agreed to live with the family of her second daughter, Y.H.'s sister.

Even if the mother does not live with her daughter's family the mother is still considered a member in the daughter's family. For both the middle and the young generation women, during the crucial period of the first month after the birth of the baby the mother's role as a caretaker of both the daughter and the newborn baby was recognized and appreciated by the husband. Therefore, the mother's position in the her daughter's family was enhanced. Later, the mother's assistance in rearing the child was very much needed by the young couple. The couple with a young child is considered blessed and is envied by others, if they have a mother-in-law taking care of the child. The parents might not agree with the mother-in-law about everything regarding the care of the children, but it is much better to leave the children in the reliable and loving hands of the grandmas rather than send them to the poorly equipped day-care centres and to be looked after by unqualified nurses and teachers.

Z.Y.'s daughter and Z.Y.'s son-in-law stayed with Z.Y. after their baby was born. Z.Y., the daughter and the baby slept on a big bed and the son-in-law on a sofa. When the baby cried at night, Z.Y. got up to change the diapers or woke up her daughter to feed the baby. After the young couple moved out, they came back to visit Z.Y. every week and Z.Y. went to see them at least once a week. When the young couple were busy, Z.Y. would take leave from her work and look after the grandson. There were two occasions, when the grandson was admitted to the hospital for a whole month for an operation, and Z.Y. accompanied him and took care of him. Now, the grandson is five years old and is still affectionately attached to Z.Y.. Whenever Z.Y. goes to see them, the boy would ask: "Will you stay

overnight, Grandma?" Thus, Z.Y.'s position in her daughter's family strengthened by her tie with the young boy. The boy has become an endless conversation topic between Z.Y. and her daughter. The third time I interviewed Z.Y., she told me that she had had a quarrel with her husband and she was going to stay with her daughter. It was not the first time she went to her reliable shelter.

The mothers of both generations knew the family affairs of their daughters quite well. For example, the mothers could tell how much money their daughters' families had in their bank savings book, and how they planned to use the savings. The couples used to discuss almost everything with their mothers/mother-in-laws, their future plans, their troubles, the problems of the children. But the daughters usually did not talk about their husbands with their mothers when they had difficulties with their husbands. S.H. has not been able to get along with her husband since they got married. Her mother knows her situation well. S.H., however never mention her disappointment and resentment in front of her mother. "She does not like him already. If I told her more, she would feel too sorry for me".

When a family dispute surfaced and got beyond control, the mother would usually be called to play the role of a judge as well as a mediator. R.L. was shocked when she found out that her husband was having an affair with her best friend. She cried day and night and told nobody about it. A week later, her husband went to see R.L.'s mother, trying to defend himself. The mother then held a family meeting to "try" the son-in-law.

Only after she married, Q.C.'s daughter began to realize that her mother's negative comments on her husband were well grounded. Q.C. felt sorry for her daughter and did her best to help her. Q.C. has been taking care of the

granddaughter since the baby was three-month old so the young couple live with their in-laws' in their three- bedroom apartment. Q.C. knew what was going on between her daughter and her son-in-law, even though the daughter seldom talked about it. Whenever her daughter had something to discuss, she turned to Q.C. instead of to her husband. The daughter is a nurse. Her hospital is in suburbs so she needed to leave home at 7 a.m. and comes back from her work after 6 p.m... Q.C.'s biggest concern was to get her daughter transferred to the city. She looked for assistance from her former classmates, colleagues, even the wife of the former head of her middle school. I was also asked to introduce her to somebody who might be of some use in arranging a job her daughter.

The more the mother became involved in the rearing of the grandchild, the closer she would become to her daughter and her own family. The mother might be treated at least as an associate member in her daughter's family.

Daughter's position in her natal family and the kinship network

In addition to the daughters' financial contribution to their natal families, the daughters are actually considered as family members in their natal families by themselves as well as by their parents and other family members. They visit their parents as frequently as possible, taking their child(ren) with them and sometimes the husbands. They are involved in the family decisions and share family responsibilities. I will examine the daughter's role in the kinship collective activities to understand their position in their natal families.

G.X.'s 7 brothers and sisters are all married with children and grandchildren. Their parents live in the suburbs. The families of all the siblings go to visit the parents on most Sundays and all public holidays. The sisters are more

enthusiastic about the activities and go more frequently than the brothers. Like most family gatherings, dinner is the highlight of the day. The daughters and son-in-laws are usually the ones who are busy in the kitchen. The daughters-in-law play with the grandchildren, chat or knit. G.X. and her sisters are unhappy with the situation but they never show their resentment. "Sister-in-law does not have to do domestic chore at our parents place. This is our family rule", G.X. told me jokingly.

Gatherings of married siblings are a feature of most families. The zhixi qingshu (direct relatives), include the old generation of parents who are still alive and married daughters, sons, their spouses and children. The most important dates for gatherings are the four days of the Chinese New Year holiday. The gathering on this day of the New Year takes place in the the parents home or in the sibling's home where the parents live in. If the parents have passed away, the gathering would be held in one of the sibling's home. I found with great interest that the homes of daughters, but not the homes of sons, were the venues for the reunions.

Y.H.'s 5 sisters and brothers and their families come to her home the first day of every Chinese New Year. They live in a dormitory of one sitting room of 12 square meters and two bedrooms. It becomes very crowded when about 20 relatives arrive. Sometimes the family of her brother is absent because they go to the wife's family for a reunion. Preparation of the big banquet of nianfan (New Year's dinner), is the most important thing. Men, not women, usually like to show their cooking skills on this occasion. After dinner, the children do the washing-up and the adults chat, while eating melon seeds and sunflower seeds.

As I observed, at the family gatherings the sister -in-law behave more like guests, while the daughters are like fishes in water at their natal family homes. As

a matter of fact, during the whole period of my field work, I never heard people use the word "niangjia" (woman's natal family), a word people in the countryside now still use to refer to the wife's family. They say "nanfang (the husband's side)" and "nufang (the wife's side)", when they mention the natal family of another married man or woman. When the woman mentions her own family, she says "my mother's place (wo ma nabian)".

Besides the family holiday gatherings, the visit to the parents and ancestors grave is another major "collective" activity. Qingming (Pure Brightness, 5th solar term of the lunar calendar) and Dongzhi (Winter Solstice, 22nd solar term) are two occasions people in Z city pay visits to the ancestors' graves to honour them and ask for their blessing. Qingming marks the end of the cold winter and the beginning of nice weather, when wild flowers blossom in the mountains. Shangfan becomes more like a Spring outing and picnic for most families. All the children look forward to it. Without exception, the first generation of daughters said that they were the coordinators of the visits to the graves. Y.C. said that last year they did not go, but this year she had a dream: her mother was crying out sadly in the dream so she told her brothers and sisters about the dream and has organized a visit to her mother's grave.

Mutual attachment and commitment

We have discussed the interdependent relations between the mother and the married daughters. I want to emphasize that the incentive of the care-giver, the mother or the daughter, rests more on the commitment to each other rather than to the consideration of future practical needs. Being able to help her mother/daughter, the person she deeply loves gives herself satisfaction. The mutual role as person-in-need is reflected at both the practical and affectionate

levels. The mother is always there when the daughter needs her and vice versa. Emotionally, some mothers and their adult daughters are still strongly attached to each other even after the daughters marry. Among the 39 mother-daughter dyads over the three generations in this study, about ten are very close.

L.F. was assigned to work in a country middle school. For seven years her daughter stayed with L.F.'s parents in Z city. L.F. and her mother wrote to each other once a week. Her mother's letter usually was of three to five pages. Sometimes it could be as long as eight pages.

G.X. and her daughter, who went to a university in North China, also exchanged letters weekly. After her daughter left, G.X. missed her so much that she became sick. During the three school years, the daughter came back home for every vacation, while many of her classmates took a tourist trip.

As discussed above, the daughter identified herself more strongly with her mother after she married and, especially, after she gave birth to a child. She then had more things to tell her mother and consult her about. The changes in identification are more obvious with the younger generation mainly for two reasons. Many young daughters, in their fantasies and ambitions, identified themselves with the people other than their mothers, who were too ordinary in the eyes of their daughters. As for many middle generation mothers, it was the first time in their lives they really had some time for their daughters and, some of them just started to realize that the most important thing was not the cause of communism or their own contribution to the socialist construction of China but their own family. They felt sorry or even guilty for being too devoted to their work and neglecting their daughters when their daughters were young and needed the mothers' personal care and company very much.

From the mother's perspective, the more a married daughter became attached to her, the more the mother would become devoted to the daughter and the grandchildren. The conduct of R.F.'s mother was just one of the many touching stories.

"My mother did most of things in taking care of my daughter. I washed her clothes. My mother prepared food for her, and coaxed her to sleep in the evening. She slept with my mother until she went to primary school. She was closer to my mother than to me. I took her to play outside when I got home from work early.

I (divorced and) married again in 1968. My daughter was 4 years old. This time I lived with my husband at the dormitory of my work unit. My daughter lived with my mother in our old apartment. Every day, my mother took a bus, holding my daughter in one hand and carrying the thermos bottle with boiled water in the other hand and came to our home. She boiled the water to bring to us so we could save two fen instead of buying boiled water from the school canteen. She cooked the dinner for the whole family and then went back with my daughter after dinner."

Q.C. felt sorry for her daughter, who could not have enough rest after her tiring work at the hospital. The daughter worried that Q.C. was too exhausted after a long day taking care of her baby. Everyday, when Q.C.'s daughter went to work, she carried the family's laundry with her, so she could wash it during the lunch break, while her colleague took nap. The mother and the daughter tried to persuade each other to take a rest and fought to do more domestic chores. Q.C. hesitated about whether she should join our classmates reunion, because she had to be at home with the baby during the weekdays, while her daughter would be on duty in the hospital. Her daughter then urged her to go. She said that she could

take a day off. Q.C. did not go in the end, knowing that the one day's leave would cost the daughter attendance bonus for that month.

The degree of mutual commitment and attachment vary from family to family. This depends on many factors. Two main conditions contribute to the attachment. Those mothers and daughters, who have been close to each other since the daughter's childhood, keep their close ties after the daughter has married. Those women, whose marriages had problems or found it difficult to communicate with their husbands would turn to their mothers more and become emotionally attached to them. The case of R.L.'s mother is an exception.

My mother had the best time in her life after she retired. She made friends of a group of retired intellectuals. They went to the Red Sun Square every day, dancing Spanish dances, disco or the waltz. She did not dance well. Most of the time she took pictures for these friends of hers. We felt embarrassed to see our old mother dancing in public. "You should not follow those old crazy people", we told her. She said: "I do not want your money, but I want your understanding. Come and have a look at my friends. They are all of great taste and manner". She asked all of us to the park to meet her friends on my father's birthday and we were convinced that her friends were high-class people. My mother praised the Communist Party sincerely. "All my life I will thank the Communist Party. I do nothing but I get the pension every month. Does this happen in capitalist countries?"

My mother spent most of her time with her friends. When she was sick she preferred to ask for help from her friends but not from us, her children. "You are busy and your salary will be deducted for taking leave", she said. For her, friends were better than members of her family. Only when she became seriously sick and she was lying in hospital, did she realize that her daughters were sincerely concerned about her and were the most helpful. I sent her to hospital and stayed

with her many days and nights, taking care of her. She could not eat for two weeks, but she insisted that she just had a little stomach trouble and the doctors had misjudged her illness. She did not recover and died in the hospital. More than 20 friends of hers came to visit her in the hospital and they cried bitterly over her death. Everybody said that she was a very kind old lady and they felt it was like losing a family member.

Care of sick and aged mother

There is no exception among the 20 families. The daughters are concerned more about their sick and aged mothers than their brothers. The following are the examples of who takes care of the mother when necessary.

Case 1

Y.Z. was suffering from a serious disease and was admitted to a hospital for 40 days last year. Her two daughters kept watch over her in turn for many days and nights. Her son came only occasionally.

Case 2

Y.F.'s mother was hospitalized for a whole year before she passed away. Y.F., a doctor herself, went to see her about twice a week. Y.F.'s father was responsible for taking care of her.

Case 3

R.F. did not want to have another child after she remarried. But her mother changed R.F.'s mind by reminding her that R.F., as a only child, had nobody to

turn to when her parents were sick. R.F. and her daughter took care of R.F.'s mother when she became too sick to walk in the last few months of her life.

Case 4

When Y.F. was sick, her daughter would show her concern by asking her how she felt. But the daughter has never accompanied her to see the doctor.

Case 5

Z.F.'s mother had an operation in the hospital in 1991 . All her daughters went to see her frequently. The sons and daughters-in-law visited her much less.

Case 6

S.T.'s mother, who was in poor health, lived by herself after S.T.'s father died. S.T. and one of her sisters took care of her. S.T. went to see her almost everyday after work, bringing her food and medicine. S.T.'s three brothers visited their mother on big holidays, such as National Day and Chinese New Year.

S.T. had a major operation a year ago and hospitalized for three months. Her husband, a doctor in the same hospital, took care of her. Her daughters also came to see her. Her mother visited her at least twice a week. Everytime she came, she carried some food to S.T., a bowl of rice noodles or a soup of pig spareribs. It was not easy for a 73-year-old lady to walk up the stairs to the sixth floor of S.T.'s ward. S.T. was very moved by her mother's care and concern.

Case 7

Y.L.'s mother is 76 years old now. She used to live with one of Y.L.'s brothers. Y.L. gave her 20 yuan a month. After this brother got married, her mother was unwelcome in the family and she wanted to move out. Y.L. let her mother and an unmarried brother of hers stay in a room allocated to her by her former work unit. Recently, Y.L. has found that her brother is rude to her mother and she has warned him: "You have to move out if you do not treat mother well".

Y.L. had a traffic accident in 1992 and suffered a broken leg. She was confined in hospital for three months. One of her children took most care of her. She was Y.L.'s youngest daughter, whose choice of mate caused a big fight between the mother and the daughter as mentioned previously. "The people who hate each other have more opportunities to meet", Y.L. said jokingly. By the time the daughter was in her late stage of pregnancy. Y.L. has become close to the daughter since.

Case 8

H.L.'s mother was sick but she did not want to see the doctor. H.L. and her husband managed to arrange a physical check up for her in a better equipped military hospital through the "back door". When H.L.'s mother was in the hospital, a shift schedule was worked out among the daughters: the three daughters came to keep her company in the day time, while the three sons-in-law came to watch her during the night. The two sons only paid a few visits to their mother during the three months. The sisters, had a quarrel with them accusing the brothers for being unfilial. H.L.'s mother was sad when she learned that one of her sons was pushing a wheel chair to take his mother-in-law to the park after the old lady sprained her

ankle. "He never treated me the way he is treating his mother-in-law", she said with a sigh.

Marriage gifts and the inheritance of family property

The concept of dowry and betrothal gifts was out of date in Chinese cities after the "liberation" due to both the economic structure and ideological promotion. According to the new proletarian idea, weddings must be simple, with a low profile. Most of the middle generation women spent just a few hundred yuan on candies, and water melon seeds and sunflower seeds for the guests at their wedding parties and had small scale banquets for direct relatives and close friends. When Q.C. was married in the early 1960s wedding banquets were forbidden, especially because her husband served in the army. But her step-mother insisted on having a wedding banquet otherwise the relatives would be offended. So they quietly treated about 40 guests, "four tables", in their own yard.

The weddings of the younger generation cost much more than their mothers'. The expenditure of a luxurious banquet could usually be covered by the gifts of money from the guests. However, the new family needed more than ten thousand yuan for the family's consumer durables such as domestic electrical equipment and furniture. The parents usually began to save money for the children's marriage many years earlier. It is common for the parents to use all their savings for their children's marriage. Daughters and sons were treated equally in the cases studied. The sums given as gifts increase gradually because the cost of establishing a new home for a young couple is raising rapidly along with economic development, inflation and, most of all, the fashion of setting up a fancy "new room" for the newly married couple. Mothers seem to have a final say with regard to the wedding gift for their daughters and sons.

The wedding gifts obtained by the middle generation women were insignificant in terms of financial value. Clothes, woolens or suitcases were typical gifts. These were more like souvenirs from their mothers rather than material contributions. Most families sold their valuables because of more urgent need during the country's "difficult periods", in the early 1950s or early 1960s. Y.H.'s mother managed to keep 6 rings for her three sons and three daughters. Y.H. was given a ruby ring, the best one. Z.F.'s mother used up her savings to buy 5 gold rings for her two married sons and three married daughters. She told them: "I had nothing valuable to give you when you married, now you can keep the rings as a souvenir from me."

According to the inheritance laws in China, the daughters and sons have equal inheritance rights. In the countryside, however, the law is neglected by ordinary people as well as by the local government. The situation in the cities is different, mainly because there is no private property for the family to bestow on their children. Eleven of the twenty families owned some family properties, horse-drawn carriages, trucks, grocery store, photo studio, drug store, sugar factory, theatre etc... All their businesses were taken over by the government in early the 1950s. By the time the middle generation married their parents had no inheritable property to bestow on their daughters or sons.

The economic situation of two families was influenced by the housing market emerged in the late 1980s. H.L.'s family had an old three-room house, which was too shabby to live in. The land where the house stood was going to be developed by a factory in 1987. H.L.'s two brothers sold the house and divided the money between them behind the backs of the three sisters. H.L. and her sisters found out and tried to persuade their brothers to share the money with them. They brought a law suit against the brothers after the brothers refused. The

money was then divided equally among the six brothers and sisters following the court's verdict. But the two brothers have stopped speaking to their sisters since then.

Since 1990, one room of S.H.'s family house has been rented out for six hundred yuan a month. The rent is roughly equal to the monthly salary of two people. All the rent is collected by one brother. He lost twenty thousand yuan of borrowed money on a business trip and got heavily into debt. S.H. and her other sisters and brothers were unhappy that they could not get a share of the rent, but they all agreed to let this brother continue to collect the rent until his debt is cleared.

Since later 1980s, the people in the Chinese cities began to own private property. It will be interesting to observe whether the daughters and sons will inherit the family property equally. I believe that the parents' partiality, if any, will not be decided by the child's sex exclusively.

Summary

The values and the outlook of the middle women changed at the time they became grandmothers. They realized that families were more important than their career or the state's interests.

For both the first and the second mother-daughter dyads the relations between the mother and her married daughter became closer than before, first because the daughter identified herself with her mother more after she became a mother herself. Secondly, the daughter appreciated her mother's assistance in child rearing. Thirdly, the interdependence between the mother and the daughter was of great importance in their lives. The mutual need was not at the practical level but

also, perhaps even more strongly, at the affectionate level. The emotional attachment to her mother developed in childhood and youth usually continued after she married. When a woman's marriage had problem, she would become more attached to her mother or her daughter. Their mutual attachment was based on what they had been through together as well as the strong sense of commitment, which was instilled into them by the socialization they had been exposed to throughout their lives, consciously and unconsciously. The children's great concern of their parents is called filial piety in the Chinese societies. What term should we use to describe the parents' devotion and commitment to their children?

In addition to the legitimacy of women's right to inherit property, the elimination of private property in practice disables patrilineal inheritance. The sons and the daughters are usually treated equally by their parents in terms of marriage gifts. At the time this study was carried out, there are hardly any valuable goods for the parents to leave to their children after they have passed away.

The most significant change in the family structure is reflected in the married daughters membership in her natal family and the semi- membership of her mother in her family. Some of the old generation women still add their husbands' surname in front of their own names after they marry. Unlike Taiwan or Hong Kong, the women of the middle generation no longer have to change their surnames and adopt her husband's family surname after marriage. People would not be too surprised if a younger generation couple named their child after the mother's surname but not the father's.

VII THE MOTHER DAUGHTER RELATIONS IN A FAMILY CRISIS

The mother-daughter relationship, just like any relationship between individuals, goes through the greatest test during a crisis. We are going to examine the mother-daughter relationship during political crisis as well as the crisis in the relations of family members.

Under the impact of "communist" ideology, especially the Marxist theory of class struggle, the family's social function and family relationship went through a serious test. According to Maoist orthodoxy, the loyalty once given to the family was to be shifted to the Party and the cause of socialism. The interests of the "small family" should be subordinated to the interests of state and society. Class differentiation dominated all personal relationships, including the relations between intimately connected family members. Children with "bad" family background must not take their parents side; instead, they were required to make a clean break with their parents. During the Cultural Revolution the world was shocked when children in Mainland China ruthlessly attacked their parents. Had the Chinese lost their tradition? Had intimate family relationship been destroyed?

The cases of political crisis

Thirteen of the 20 families were targeted at different political campaigns shook Chinese cities after 1949. The following cases show the real attitudes of the daughters in their relationships with their mothers and fathers during the political crisis.

Case 1

"I could sense the depressing atmosphere at home even when I was a child. When people demonstrated in the street, shouting slogans against capitalists, I knew that my family was the target of the political movement and I was frightened. Sometimes, when I heard my parents whispering, I asked my mother "Do we have to pay money to the government again? More confiscation?" My parents never discussed this kind of thing with me, but I understood their situation. I tried to help them by spending as little money as possible. The family's income, consisting of my mother's and father's salary, was little more than one hundred yuan per month. We had seven people in our family at the time. When I was in university I only asked my mother to give me 16 yuan a month. I spent 13 yuan on buying food coupons from the university canteen for three meals and carefully looked after the three yuan left for other expenditure. I always wanted to help my parents. I was so happy when I earned my first one yuan at 14 years old by knitting sweaters for a boutique in the neighborhood. I knew the capitalists were bad guys. But I thought my parents were different, they were hard-working and honest people. Of course I told nobody about my real thoughts. When I applied to become a member of the Youth league, the most important thing was to write pages about my "understanding" of my capitalist family background and draw a clear line between my parents and myself. I did it like everybody else with bad a family background, but I did it only to meet the needs of the teachers or the organizations.

Case 2

During the Cultural Revolution S.H.'s mother was ordered by the Red Guards in her work unit to wear an armband with the words "capitalist". S.H.'s husband asked her to stop going to see her mother. S.H. did not listen to him and continue to go to her mother's home every day after work. "I do not care what

other people think about her. She is my mother and we need each other", she told her husband.

Case 3

Y.H.'s mother received the same treatment in the Cultural Revolution. In addition to wearing the "capitalist" armband, she had to report to the Red Guard early in the morning every day and sweep the factory yard together with other "bad elements". Y.H. was hurt very much by the humiliation her mother had to suffer. But her mother consoled her, saying: "Never mind. There are so many people wearing armband. It is not a big deal".

Case 4

H.F.'s mother was a Catholic. She was arrested for "counterevolutionary religious activities" when H.F. was at junior middle school. She cried through the night when her mother was dragged away from their house. Because she could not hold her tears at school H.F.'s application to join the Youth League was denied for she failed to make a clear break with her mother. As an ambitious adolescent, she was hurt greatly. Also, one's future at the time depended on his/her political conduct. Her worries about the future became true before too long. Only four of the 21 girls in her class were accepted by the higher level school. These lucky four either had a good family background or were members of the Youth League. H.F., a good student in her class, lost her chance to enter senior middle school, the only channel to the universities.

H.F. felt that her life was shadowed by her mother's political trouble. She blamed her mother for her preoccupation with religion and at the same time she sympathized with her, knowing that her mother had not committed any crime and

was treated unjustly. During the seven years of her mother's imprisonment, H.F. never went to the labour camp to visit her mother. At the beginning H.F.'s mother wondered why H.F. did not come to visit her as her sisters and brother did. She was told that H.F. was busy. After about a year she realized the real reason and stopped asking. H.F. became even more reluctant to visit her mother in the labour camp after she married, because her husband was a Party member. It was unusual and brave for a Party member to marry someone who had a mother in prison. He actually risked his political future. As a matter of fact, he was attacked later during a factional struggle in the Cultural Revolution for he did not get the Party's approval for his marriage.

After H.F. gave birth to a daughter, her mother spent the few yuan of her carefully saved money to buy a piece of red corduroy for H.F.'s baby. Using the material for the outside and the put-together red guard armbands for lining, H.F.'s elder sister has made a cape for the baby. In 1975, her mother had a stroke. H.F. wanted so much to visit her mother and even prepared to go once. Her husband said: "Ok, you go. But you have to be responsible for the consequences". Then H.F. changed her mind. She cried quietly at night, blaming herself for marrying a Party member. On the other hand, she thought that her husband had already sacrificed a lot by marrying her, so in return she should also sacrifice herself for the marriage and for their children by cutting her relations with her own mother. After the stroke her mother needed to be helped in her daily life. H.F.'s elder sister and her children went to the camp to take care of her. They called H.F. unfilial daughter, who only needed her husband but not her mother. They named her after a character in a novel by Balzac, who treated his parents badly.

I interviewed H.F. three times. She burst into tears each time when she was telling me that she had never visited her mother in the labour camp, never brought

her husband to see her mother, had not taken care of her sick mother, and was absent when her mother died. She did not join her family when they buried her mother.

Case 5

Y.R. has been closer to her grandmother than to her mother for she was raised by her grandmother. During the anti-corruption campaign in 1991, an accusation was lodged against Y.R.'s husband by his work unit. They claimed that he embezzled four hundred thousand yuan. Y.R. fainted when she heard about it in court. Y.R. lived under great pressure, not just because her husband was in jail but also because the story of the corruption group was widely reported in the local press. Y.R. became sick and could hardly walk. Y.R.'s 70-year-old mother came to see her every day, cooked and did all the domestic chores for her. After dinner, she would take Y.R. for a walk, attempting to drive Y.R.'s worries away. Y.R. and her mother had never talked so much all their lives. Y.R. felt that it was the first time she really knew her mother. She then asked her mother, why she did not care for Y.R. as much as for the other brothers and sisters. "Oh, you have had so much attention and love from your grandmother already. You were her favorite", her mother answered.

Case 6

Y.L.'s father died in prison. The Neighborhood Committee requested that her mother and three of her brothers and sisters move from Z city and settle down in a remote village in a poor county. The family were struck by desperate poverty at the time. One of Y.L.'s sisters starved to death. The 60 yuan of settle-down fee for each family member was so attractive to Y.L.'s mother that she decided to

leave the city. Y.L. was married and worked in a primary school in the city suburbs at the time. Crying bitterly, she begged her mother not to go, and threw herself on her knees in front of her mother. She said to her mother that it was better to be a dog in the city rather than a peasant in the poor countryside. When her mother insisted, Y.L. threatened to break off her relations with her mother, if she was really going. But her mother still left with Y.L.'s other three siblings. For two years, her mother wrote many letters to Y.L., but she did not even open them. Y.L. became reconciled with her mother only after her mother came back to city. She did her best to help her mother and her siblings to settle down in the city.

The cases of relationship crisis

Case 1

As mentioned in Chapter VI, R.L. was shocked and almost collapsed when she found out accidentally that her husband was having an affair with her best friend. She wanted to divorce her husband, but her mother persuaded her not to. R.L. went back to stay with her parents for about two weeks. R.L.'s daughter was having the most miserable time of her life. Her Daughter cried every night, missing her R.L. dreadfully. Back home again, R.L. started to sleep with her daughter and let her husband sleep in another room with her son. Now five years have passed and she still sleeps with her daughter. Her daughter is always close to her. R.L. told her children about what had happened between her and their father. Both of them were deeply hurt and became very angry with their father. The son was influenced by the scandal very much. His performance at school deteriorated and he failed to get accepted by an ordinary high middle school. He started to work at the age of 16. The daughter was younger and with an open personality, so she coped with the situation more easily than her brother. The atmosphere at the

dinner table has been tense since. The daughter is the one who does most the talking. She usually talks about what happens at school.

R.L. would not discuss the problem between her husband and herself with her daughter. Her health deteriorated after the "incident". Sometimes she asked the daughter what would happen if she became defeated by disease or paralyzed. Her daughter always assured her: " Don't worry. I will take care of you".

In an interview R.L.'s daughter told my daughter that she was a happy girl because she had a great mother. Of course she was upset by the frequent quarrel between her parents. "They quarreled again last night. My father took a pair of scissors to cut the trousers my mother made for him to pieces. Since that thing happened (both her mother and she use 'that thing' when they mention the father's affair), I refuse to talk with my father. I know that my father is wrong most of the times they quarrel or fight, but sometimes my mother is not right either. No matter who is right, I always take my mother's side. I hate my father for what he has done."

Case 2

Among the 39 dyads of mother and daughter there is one case where the relationship is in crisis. That is R.F. and her daughter.

My mother does not like me. I do not like her either. She does not like me because she hates my biological father. She was already unhappy when she was pregnant. I started to drink milk when I was three months old because my mother breasts turned dried due to her unhappy marriage. My grandma used to treat me very well. I slept with her. I liked her in spite of the fact that she was an opium smoker. She was the only person in the world who was really concerned about

me. When I was in school, I missed my grandma, but never missed my mother. When my menstruation came I was frightened to death, my mother told me nothing before, I did not ask her either. I asked my grandma. She told me that it was a good thing. "It is called the coming of happiness (laixi)," she told me.

After my brother was born, my grandma's attitude towards me changed. She cared about my brother more than myself. All the toys were his. When we quarreled, he was always right and I was always wrong.

Every time my mother saw me, she put on a long face. Her eyes turned red and her brown raised. She spent all her time and energy on my brother. I wondered whether I was really hers. I looked in the mirror many times to convince myself that I was not her daughter. To my great disappointment, I did look like her. She scolded me and beat me. Once she told me that I was a thorn in her flesh. When I grew up, I reminded her about what she said to me. She denied it. She never realized that she hurt me deeply.

I have not been happy since I was a little girl. One night, when I was about 8 or 9 years old, she drove me out to the street at midnight. I wished that somebody would come to take me away. A drunken man passed by and talked to me. I chatted with him. I was not afraid at all. Sometimes my mother beat me very hard. Once she slapped me so hard that my nose bled. One day, I broke the rice bowl at lunch and my hand started to bleed. My mother tried to dress the wound. I pushed her away and cried loudly: "Do not wrap up my wound. Let me bleed. When all my blood is gone I can die. let me die." The last time my mother beat me was when I was 23 years old and had already been working for 6 years.

At home my mother and I seldom exchanged ideas or discussed anything. What she did give me a dressing down. I became rebellious

and suffered from a psychological imbalance. When my mother asked me to do a domestic chore, I told her: "No, I will not do it because you scold me every day". I was sensitive to people's expression, their talk and was always alert. I felt that nobody paid attention to me. I did not want to talk to others either. I felt depressed. My health was poor. ("Who took you to see a doctor and who took care of you when you were sick?" I asked her) My mother took care of me, when I did not feel well. She put a cold towel on my head when I had a high fever.

My mother is a hard-working, responsible primary school teacher. Her job is not easy. When she has a hard time at school, she comes home in a very bad mood and gives vent to her anger on me. She was so angry with me once. She wrote a note to me, saying that she was going to break off the mother-daughter relationship with me. She and my step father do not get on well too. She complains about him behind his back. When they quarrel, I always take my mother's side. So my step father hates me to the very marrow of my bones. I kept a diary when I was in middle school. I never told my friends or other people that I was treaded badly at home. But in my diary I wrote everything. I was thinking that someday before I committed suicide, I would give my diary to my mother to read and let her know why I did not want to live. One day, my step father secretly read my diary and shawed it to my mother. They were furious because in my diary I said that my home was a wolf's nest.

The home is my mother's home but not mine. She is such an assertive person. Everything has to be done her way. She does not like me to bring friends home. When I was working in a factory at the age of 17, I was elected as the secretary of the Youth League in our workshop. One Saturday afternoon, I brought the boys and girls of our workshop home and had a dance party. We were dancing the Russian style collective youth dance, when my parents came back. They claimed

that I had damaged the family reputation and they gave me three days' notice to move out.

I moved to the factory dormitory and lived there for three years. During this period, my mother never visited me or looked at what the living conditions were like. I came back to see my mother approximately every two months. I came back at Chinese new year and also holidays. Once, I came back for mid-Autumn festival and found my parents were quarreling again. I then went back to the dormitory and found I was the only one left in the whole building. I cried through the night. At that time I was very concerned about the family and felt so sad about the unhappiness of our family life. When I grew up I realized that they have their lives and I am living mine. I do not care that much. When I was very young, I hated them and did not know how to express myself. I was so afraid of my mother. I am not afraid of her anymore now. I feel free and my personality has changed. I have become open and cheerful. I pursued something of higher value.

I know that I cannot rely on my family. I have to find my own road and create my own social network. I could not care less about their attitude towards me now. I had a miserable life as a child. Now I should treat myself well. I like traveling. I feel wonderful when I can pour out my feelings to the mountains and lakes. My parents never tried to cultivate me, to help develop my own skills. But because they did not care about me, I had an opportunity to become independent and strong. Once, I was sent on a training course by the factory to Chongqing for one year together with some young women-workers. The weather was awful, the food was bad. All the girls became homesick and cried a lot. Only I felt happy. I made the acquaintance of a group of local university students and had a very good time.

I always wonder how I could be my mother's child. We are so different. Of course, we share some common interests. Both of us like

nature. She has influenced me in terms of handling relations with other people. She is kind to people and always tries to help others as I do. do I. She wanted me to become a primary school teacher like herself. She does not know that I really look down on her colleagues. They stir things up, engage in exchanging gossip, just like a bunch of housewives.

My mother never gave me birthday present. We never celebrated my mother's birthday either. I do not even know which day is my step father's birthday. In recent years, I like to hold birthday parties for myself. I tell my parents and my brother: "Tomorrow is my birthday. If you want to come, please do." I helped my step father when he was treated unjustly and detained. I did it for my mother as well as for justice. I knew he wasn't corrup. They were so unfair to him. I would help him even if he was a stranger. When my mother was sick, I also worried. After all these things, I still care about her. A friend of mine, whose English is very good, once had the chance to leave China. But she did not want to go. "what about my parents? There will be nobody to look after them, if I leave." Unlike her, I want to leave. I want to make money. When I am rich I can send money to support my family and let my mother have a happy life.

A good friend of mine became very rich by prostitution. She bought a car and rented it out to a taxi driver. She was expelled by the factory and moved to Shenzhen. She continues to be a prostitute there and makes more money. Now she owns several cars and lives a life of luxury. . The contrast between her life and mine is so great. I chose to go different way. I studied hard and, started a small business recently with my friends. I am still trying to leave this city or, if possible, leave China.

When I was a little girl and was treated badly by my mother, I made up my mind that I would never get married and have children. I do not think that way now. I hve had a few boy friends. But I have not

met anybody with whom I want to spend all my life together. It seems that I am constantly disappointed in love.

R.F. knew that there were problems between her and her daughter, but she did not realize how serious the situation was. She did not know that her daughter really hated her because her daughter tried not to show it. She did not agree with her daughter's ambition to open a shop. "If the business failed, as a parent, I should have to give my savings to her to pay the debt. But I said nothing to her.

Summary

All the cases of political crisis in this study indicate that in spite of the compulsory and intensive political socialization they received at school and through the media the daughters have not become true believers of the communist orthodoxy. They do not judge their mothers by their family background or political behaviour as the party and the government expected. They do not apply the theory of class struggle to deal with their family members. Some of them always believed that their parents were different from others with the same background. Many of them never questioned the correctness of the ideology that was instilled into them until the people very close to them were attacked.

In the case of H.F., she acted like an unfilial daughter. But she never stopped loving her mother and being concerned about her. She did not go to visit her mother in the labour camp because she was afraid of the impact on her husband and her children caused by her connection with her jailed mother. She had learned a bitter lesson from her own experience in the past and was aware of possible damage because of her link with someone who was condemned by the government as a "bad element".

The story of R.F.'s daughter resembles the issues faced by mother-daughter relationships in other societies: child abuse, misunderstanding, communication problems, the generation gap, differences in values and outlook etc. Nevertheless, the strong message of her attitude represents a major characteristic of the mother-daughter relationship in China. That is her adoption of the role of a daughter. No matter how much she dislikes her mother she still identifies with the obligations and duties of being a daughter. She tries not to show her resentment against her mother, her step-father and her step-brother. She helped her step-father, who was in political trouble and intends to support her mother when she gets old. The mother and the grown up daughter always avoid open conflict and they succeeded on most occasions.

VIII CONCLUSION

Relationships and culture

Robert Hinde uses the relationships approach and combines the findings of the social and biological sciences to explore the dialectical relations between human behaviour and culture. He states that: "it is becoming apparent that a "relationship" approach is crucial for many issues in the social sciences, including the understanding of how individuals affect and are affected by the societies in which they live." He categorizes human relationships into six dimensions.

1. The content of the relationship which refers to what the individuals do together. 2. The diversity of the interactions which refers to the number of different things the participants in the relationship do together. 3. The quality of the interactions. 4. Intimacy, the extent to which the participants in a relationship reveal all aspects--experiential, emotional and physical--of themselves to each other. 5. Interpersonal perception and 6. Commitment. (Hinde: 1987)

Viewing human relationships from an anthropological perspective, Francis Hsu argues that human beings in all societies relate to one another and to ideologies and spiritual matters, as well as to material things, by way of role or affect. Role is usefulness. In this approach the objects to which one relates are tools for rewards or satisfactions beyond them. In human relations, it means what I can do for you in return for what you can do for me. The utmost point in role is what money can buy; it involves, at any rate, a high degree of calculation. Every social organization defines role in terms of its two components: the position of the individual in it and the duties, obligations, and privileges specific to the individual's role.

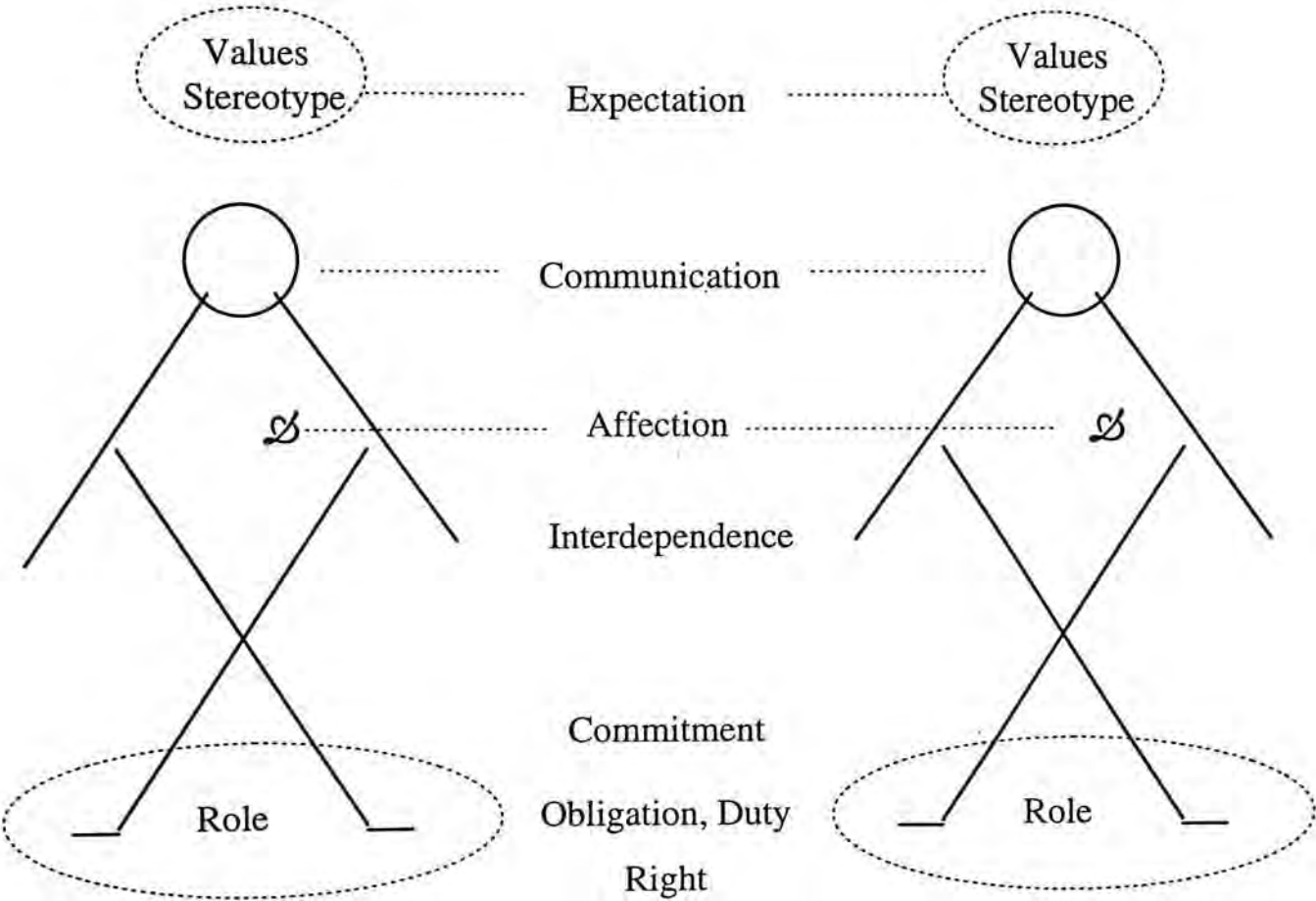
Affect has to do with how the individual feels about the objects which he relates to, about his role and the duties, obligations, and privileges associated with his role. Affect can be described chiefly in such terms as devotion, worship, love, hate, friendship and comradeship, sympathy and sacrifice. True affect is totally incommensurate with money or calculation. The utmost point of affect may involve giving up one's life or wealth for the sake of one's good name, kinsmen, lovers, leaders, or causes, not because they are profitable but because one is deeply committed to them (Hsu: 1979).

This study is inspired by both Hinde and Hsu's analysis of human relationships and intends to apply their approaches to bring out certain patterns from the empirical materials and use them in the description of the mother-daughter relationships in the different life spans. However, neither of Hinde's or Hsu's dimensional perspectives could help us to specify the aspects of the relationships that are influenced by the changes in the larger social context.

My daughter gave me a book mark with some praise of mothers on it: "When the Lord gave us mothers, He gave love that never ends. And with His gifts of mothers, He gave us our dearest friends". A mother's love exists in all human societies as well as among animals. To explore the interaction of family relationships and culture in the context of the social-economic transformation that the three generations of women experienced, we have to analyse the culturally and socio-economically determined attributes of their relationships. To "purify" the composition of our research subjects we should first of all separate the aspects which are largely determined or strongly influenced by the social setting, from the aspects which carry the pan-cultural properties, such as love or affection between mother and daughter. Other attributes, analysed by Hsu in his influential study of the dominance of family relationships, such as inclusiveness and asexuality of the

mother-daughter dyad can also be excluded for the same reason. The following drawing may roughly demonstrate the major aspects of the mother-daughter relationship that enable us to identify the culturally or economically determined attributes.

The Attributes of Mother-Daughter Dyad



In the five major aspects of the mother-daughter relationship, the role relationship and the expectation relationship are determined mainly by culture and bear the collective characteristics of a particular society. For instance, role is a culturally determined position, which includes mutual commitment, rights and obligations in the cultural setting. Commitment is the most important attribute that works positively for improving relations. Expectation is largely determined by the value of the mother and the daughter and the social stereotype of women,

perceived and accepted by the mother and the daughter respectively. As I discussed in Chapter V, the mother's expectations of her daughter influence the content and direction of the socialization to a great degree. On the other hand, the daughter's expectations of her mother affect her perception of her mother and her attitude to her mother. Therefore, their expectations could bring a negative impact on mother-daughter relations. When the mother and the daughter do not share the same values, the greater the expectations, the tenser their relations will be.

The five aspects of relationships interact, of course. For example, the communication relationship is greatly influenced by their mutual expectations, and the affectionate relationship could be changed when the role changes.

Mutual commitment is the most outstanding characteristic in the mother-daughter relationships of this study. Stories of mutual concern, mutual support, selfless devotion, and mutual sacrifice I have heard during the the interviews are too many to repeat in this paper.

There are two kinds of interdependent relationship, spiritual and material. The latter relates to the socio-economic structure of the society and could be affected by social factors. I will address this issue in the next section.

Cultural transmission, cultural transformation and the mother-daughter link

According to my own experiences and observations, the mother-daughter tie is one of the main channels through which culture is transmitted. My mother is the most influential person for me with respect to my self identity, beliefs, mentality, attitudes, mode of life and many other aspects which we call culture.

As we can see from this study, despite the compulsory and intensive socialization the daughter received from their schools and that they were exposed to in the society in general, the traditional concept of role is deeply rooted in the three generations of women. The attitude of the mothers and daughters towards each other is influenced by traditional social norms. Z.Y. rejected her own choice of boy friend and accepted her step-mother's choice because she thought one must obey one's mother, especially because she was a step- mother, who was not affectionately related to her. R.F's daughter did not like her mother at all, but her plan for the future still included her mother's future.

M.Z.'s mother, who has six daughters and one son, said: " I would certainly not be alive today, if I had six sons and one daughter". All the women interviewed agreed that the daughters, especially the married daughters, were more filial to their parents than the sons. I would argue that the mother-daughter tie is an important channel of cultural transmission in terms of family values. It is natural that girls are influenced by the family more than the boys, simply because they spend much more time with her mother than her brothers. Since her childhood she became her mother's assistant in the domestic sphere. After the daughter became a mother herself, she relied on her mother's guidance and assistance and thus developed a durable associateship between the mother and the daughter, which helped to preserve the channel of cultural transmission. In other words, socialization becomes a life time process. Besides, the socialization happened in an harmonious and spontaneous way. The mother's behaviours, more than her words, help to instill and pass the cultural traits, norms, values, and the discipline according to which actions to take and not to take, to her daughter. It may partially explain why "the communism did not simply erase the past. The past lives on in China, muted and transformed in certain ways, vital and persistent in others (Grubard: 1993)."

The changes in women's economic and social status in terms of education, employment and freedom to choice of mate and divorce occurred gradually from generation to generation as shown by official statistics as well as by this case study (ZGFNTJZL: 1991). The stereotype of Chinese women also changed dramatically because of the intensive ideological promotion carried out by the government. The old generation women's expectations of their daughters were ambivalent. Nevertheless, the new life-goals of their daughters were sincerely supported by their mothers and thus the mothers willingly adjusted their own concept. As a result, the ideological conflict between two generations was buffered. As for the middle generation women and their daughters, the unprecedented impact of economic reform could create a tremendous gap in their expectation and influence their relations. This is to be seen in the coming years.

The most significant factors brought by the socio-economic changes which influenced mother-daughter relations were women's economic independence and the elimination of private property in Chinese cities. The woman's future no longer depends on her son/s. She does not have to carefully look after her alliance with the son and skillfully handle her relations with the daughter-in-law. Her old years are secured by her lifetime pension. When she does not have to subdue her own feelings, her close relations with her daughter could become durable. I must emphasize that the situation in the countryside is not the same because the family property is still inherited by the male descendent.

Until now, except in some big cities such as Beijing, the boy preference is still prevails in rural and urban China.¹ How do we explain the phenomenon if a daughter is more committed to her parents and her relationship with her mother and her natal family is closer and more durable compared with her brothers? I would argue that the boy preference can be attributed to three factors: 1) The time lag between the change in people's concept and the socio-economic transformation. 2) The social sphere of the society is still dominated by men and 3) The most important one, the contribution of women in reproduction is not substantially recognized and rewarded by the society. Thus the unfair terms handicaps women, when they have to compete with men in the social sphere. In fact, the problem is universal.

Mother-daughter solidarity and family associateship

A key element in the patrilineal kinship system is the inheritance of property, with its prestige and obligations. The property, rights and obligations are passed along in the male line (Robin Fox, 1967:52). The patrilocal system means the married couple stays with the husband's family. The patriarchal character implies that the senior male family member controls decision making and the resources in the family.

The status one enjoys in the family depends on his/her sex and seniority (Walby: 1990). In the Chinese context the concept of "xiangyan", the worship of ancestors by their male descendants, does not just raise the status of the male descendants but make them indispensable for family's continuity.

¹ A survey conducted in Beijing in 1991 shows that more couples prefer to have girls rather than boys. See Feng Litian :1994, Wang Shuxin:1994.

Examining the twenty cases of this study, we see clearly that 1) there is no property in the families to inherit, 2) the married young couple can live by themselves or with either the wife's or the husband's family 3) the father's or the grandfather's authority over the family affairs is disappearing and 4) there are no memorial tablets for worshipping the ancestors in their sitting rooms. In fact, the activities of the "ancestor cult", such as visiting a grave to honour the memory of the dead, are organized by women in most families. Being a man does not automatically mean having the final say in the family. A ten year old boy in China once told me: "In our family one subject subdues another: I am afraid of my sister, who is afraid of my mother, who is afraid of my father, who is afraid of my grandma, who is afraid of me."

Francis Hsu's proposition is that the dominance of the father-son dyad is based on patriarchal Chinese society. Can the cultural tradition of the family system continue to work when the economic preconditions disappear? As we can see from this case study the father-son dyad no longer dominates kinship relationships. The patriarchal order, which dominated the Chinese kinship system and influenced China's political system for many millennia, is disappearing as a result of the fundamental changes in the economic structure and the ideological promotion in the society. This research is too narrow to answer the question raised by C.K. Yang decades ago: What is the new mode of family relationships? Nevertheless, a few phenomena generalized from this study can provide some evidence for further studies.

Except for the very few, the women of both the middle and younger generations used the term "my mother's place" and "his mother's place" instead of "nianjia" and "pojia", when they mentioned their own natal families and their husbands' natal families. The married daughter is no long "the spilt water". In fact,

the married daughter usually keeps closer relations with her natal family, with the mother in particular, than does/do her brother/s which makes the mother-daughter dyad lasting, durable and active after the daughter marries. Also, the mother-daughter solidarity and the mother's involvement in the rearing of the daughter's child enhances her position in her daughter's family. Viewing the kinship relationship of the families in this study, the mother-daughter tie is the strongest and magnetic link in the kinship network.

This phenomenon can be explained by what I tentatively call "family associateship". The core of this theory suggests that besides the resident members, a family may have other nonresident member(s). For example, a daughter may continue to be considered as a member of her natal family and function as such, and a mother may be considered as a member of her daughter's family. The level of the association depends on the degree of the nonresident member's involvement in decision-making and resource-control as well as the share of resources, duties and obligations in the family. The family's structure and the relationship of the family members could be influenced by the associateship. The phenomenon that the Chinese women's status in the domestic domain is much higher than in the public domain can be partially explained by the solidarity of mother-married daughter which is based on their long term supporting relationship and mutual commitment. In other words, the woman's status at home is secured by the association between the mothers and their married daughters¹

¹ According to a large scale survey conducted in 1990 in 21 Chinese provinces, more than 60% of the urban women consider their status at home quite high. See Tao Chunfang: 1993. P.245.

Finally, it is necessary to stress that the findings of this study are not applicable to the rural areas of China. The situation of women in the Chinese countryside is totally different from the situation of the urban women described in this paper. The Chinese farmers are living in a different world with respect to the socio-economic conditions.

ANNEX: Study ones own culture

In this paper I examine my own culture, studying my contemporaries. We grow up together in the same society and at the same time. I have experienced the relations I analyze.

A famous quotation of a Chinese poem puts it well: "One does not know the true face of Lu Mountain because he is in the mountain". Taking most social phenomena for granted, local researchers are not as sensitive to the characteristics and uniqueness of their culture as the researchers from other cultures. For a long period, studying alien cultures, especially those more manageable cultures of the minorities or "primitive" societies was the main trend of the anthropological enquiries, even it took greater effort and longer time for the anthropologists to master a new language, to gain historical and social knowledge of the society in question, and to establish trust with the informants.

Outside researchers see the wood more clearly, whereas the insiders understand the trees better. It is thus natural for outsiders, the observers, to take an etic approach and for the insiders, the participants, to have an emic approach. It is easier for the outsiders to sense the indigenous categories and phenomena, and for insiders to understand them.

Participant observation, a broadly adopted anthropological research method, enables the researchers from outside to study the society from both the etic and emic perspectives. But unless one can live in the field for years, it is not easy for the outsider to fully see the things through the eyes of the insiders. While looking for cultural differences, anthropologists from outside tend to exaggerate them or have bias when selecting facts. Anthropological critics have noticed that

the existence of an outsider may influence the behaviours of the people he/she studies (Rudy: 1982).

Culture means, in a way, collective characteristics of a society. The outsider, who consciously or unconsciously compares the social phenomena with his/her own society, may easily catch the collective character of other people in a comparatively isolated society. However, in a complicated and rapidly changing society, such as today's China, exposed to and influenced by other cultures of this "global village", researchers from both within or outside the society, are equally facing a great challenge in their efforts to explore culturally imposed values, culturally determined positions and culturally accepted norms.

For many inside researchers, the final concern rests on the development of the society and the well being of its people. This kind of emotional attachment to the people and the society may also cost the researcher his/her objectivity, yet this is crucial in social studies. Anthropologists who have spent a long time in the field may also develop the same feelings towards his/her target of research. But I strongly believe that our concern for the society and its people would give us greater motivation to seek the truth than pure career concern, such as drive to test a theory or obtain an academic degree.

In pursuing a study of the mother-daughter relationship in the city where I grew up, I could see each 'tree' clearly. For an in-depth study of culture I needed to understand the "wood" as well. It would be more difficult for me to see its true face had I never left my home town and been exposed to other life style and other cultures and therefore looked at the wood from a distance.

To study the culture one lives in has strengths and weaknesses. Both inside and outside researchers are inevitably influenced by the prejudice and preference instilled into them by their own culture and by their own personal experiences. Given appropriate training, I believe, there are no obstacles that cannot be overcome in exploring your own society and culture or that of others. The awareness of the advantages and disadvantages can help us, however, to see both the trees and the wood in a better light.

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